

The
Home Department
of To-Day

FLORA V. STEBBINS

The "Times" Handbooks
for Sunday-School
Workers. Number 5

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THE HOME DEPARTMENT OF TO-DAY

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By
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FLORA V. STEBBINS



The Sunday School Times Company
Philadelphia

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FOREWORD

The aim of this book is to help to a better understanding and to a truer and wider conception of one of the most important factors in the religious education of the church and community—the Home Department of the Sunday-school.

We hope that the why and the how of this department may be made very clear to all who read. We do not purpose to consider the recent history of the work, interesting and valuable as that is. We do not bring to you one untried theory, necessary as theories are. We do bring to you the plans, the methods, and the ideals of the Home Department of to-day.

As Visitor, superintendent, district secretary and state secretary, the writer has given all of her time for more than six years to this work. Now, and for all the rest of her life, she is a Home Department worker at large. Out of this experience and from her contact with workers from all parts of North America, she sends forth this little book with the prayer that it may help all now engaged in this work; that it may stimulate many to undertake it; that it may be a helpful handbook for all secretaries engaged in organized effort in the Sunday-school.

F. V. S.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IT IS

Before defining the Home Department, we shall first determine its purpose.

1—To make membership and fellowship in the Sunday-school possible for every one.

2—To secure systematic Bible study on the part of every one.

3—To secure recognition and due appreciation of the family and the home in our church work.

4—To bring into the home a truer ideal of family life and privilege.

5—To secure the deepest possible interest in the church and all its work.

“Not the individual, but the *family* is the unit of society, and the Home Department of to-day, true to its name, aims to unite, in common interests, all the members of the family in the study of God’s Word, his teachings, his love and his care.”

WHAT IT IS.—Meeting the newly-elected superintendent of a large school on the street, the writer asked him if he had a Home Department in his school. He looked puzzled for a moment and then said: “Home Department ?

Home Department ? Well, I should say that I had ! A big one, too." The questioner was delighted ; another big Home Department to add to those already on the state list. " I am so glad. Who is the superintendent, and how many Visitors and members ? " With laughing eyes but serious mien he replied : " Too many for me to count. Too many for any officers to muster their courage to handle. The many who do not attend Sunday-school, but cheerfully leave the church at the close of the morning preaching service ; 80% of the parents of the children in our school, 50% of the young people between the ages of twenty and thirty years, and the many who really and truly cannot come, who would if they could. There ! Haven't we a big Home Department ? " He had, and many superintendents have just that kind of a Home Department, but that is not the kind we respect, nor is it the Home Department of the Sunday-school.

A Home Department is that department which enables every one who cannot or will not attend the regular sessions of the Sunday-school to enjoy the privileges of full membership in the school upon the condition of at least one-half hour's study of the current Sunday-school lesson each week.

Experience has taught us that when any school awakens to a knowledge of the conditions which

exist in every school and community, and is willing to do the best that it can to change these conditions, it is possible to have a good Home Department of the Sunday-school.

After two years of special endeavor in this department, in Massachusetts, the results were so manifest and so gratifying that a new definition was given at a convention ; this so well expressed the meaning and accomplishment of the work that it was adopted by the state committee as Massachusetts' definition of her Home Department work. "The Home Department is the lengthening of the cords and the strengthening of the stakes of the Sunday-school, by taking it, with its two-fold purpose of bringing souls to Christ and of building souls up in Christ, into the home, to those who for any reason cannot or will not attend the regular sessions of the school."

Subsequent experience has proved that the truths of the statements contained in this lengthy definition have been experienced by states in the west, the north, and the south. What it is in one state, it can be, and is steadily becoming, in all the states, provinces and territories of our land.

So potent a factor has the Home Department become in the Sunday-school world that all the evangelical denominations have recognized, adopted, and recommended it to their schools.

All the great denominational and interdenominational publishing houses have issued complete sets of Home Department requisites and descriptive circulars, samples of which may be had upon application. Many issue a special Home Department quarterly. The teachers' magazines have pertinent and instructive Home Department matter. The Sunday School Times and the World Evangel keep the brightest and best of methods and incidents before their readers.

Nearly every state, province and territory in North America has its own special Home Department secretary, with many assistants in the counties, townships and districts. The state and provincial associations issue descriptive circulars which are cheerfully sent out from headquarters for their organized work, upon application. The International Association keeps guard over all the work and has its own circular on the subject to foster and stimulate interest in the department. This circular can be obtained on request from Mr. Marion Lawrance, Toledo, Ohio.

The Home Department is now thoroughly established in the Sunday-school realm. It has proved its right to live; it has won its way by supplementing—never supplanting—all the deep foundations of the church and Sunday-school structure, and widening all the avenues of their service. Grand and glorious as is the Home De-

partment of to-day, it is but the earnest of what the Home Department of to-morrow may be.

“The field is the world.” Matt. 13: 38.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.” Mark 16: 15.

CHAPTER II

ITS TERRITORY

“What is the best field for Home Department work ?” is often asked. That place where the greatest number of people are out of Sunday-school fellowship and membership; that place where so many of the “good people” are satisfied with attendance on the preaching service on Sunday, and have little or no thought or interest in the teaching service. This may be true of the town, village, or city community. Wherever there is one soul who cannot or will not attend the Sunday-school service there is a field for Home Department work.

In the hill and mountain country, where roads are bad and distances great, and, it may be, churches few and many miles away, the existence of this department opens up a mine of possibilities.

A colporteur, touring northern Wisconsin, called at a home one afternoon to secure a dinner. He was made royally welcome, for this family had no English-speaking neighbors within eight miles, and the settlement was thirteen miles away. The colporteur asked about the church

affiliations. Fifteen years' residence under such conditions had made the man almost forget that he had any church relations. Once in a while the circuit rider would preach at the settlement, and if the notice of the service got round in time, everybody turned out to hear him. The settler had had no news of his old home in New England for years, but there, as a boy, he used to go to church and Sunday-school every Sunday. Yes, he did wish that his children might have the privileges that he had had in his boyhood, but it was impossible. A tactful presentation of the Home Department plan, and an exhibition of the attractive quarterly and the good print Bible, won the admiration and interest of the entire family, and all agreed to join the "Colporteur's Home Department Class." He would send the next supplies when due, if he was unable to make the rounds himself. On leaving the home, the colporteur said: "If you enjoy the study of the lesson together, when you go down to the store, take some of these extra quarterlies and application cards, and pass them on to your friends."

Six months later, when the colporteur drove up to the door, the man came out and said: "No, don't hitch your horse there; Dick will take her round to the barn and put her up. You must stay with us and visit our Sunday-school." The next day, Sunday, they drove the thirteen

miles to the settlement. In the hall over the "store" were gathered nearly all the children for miles around, and many grown-ups. Those who could not come were members of the Home Department. Every Sunday, rain or shine, this family drove the thirteen miles to carry on the Sunday-school, numbering nearly fifty, and during the quarter visited every one of the forty-two Home Department members.

The character of the settlement had changed; the observance of the sabbath, the study of the Word, and a recognition of God's power and his love, had all been brought to this isolated community through one family becoming thoroughly interested in the Home Department of the Sunday-school. They could not rest until they had a Sunday-school of their own to "hitch the other Home Department members on to."

In the great lumber camps of the northwest, in the mines, on the seas, we find that we may, if we will, enter in and possess the land and sea, that his Word may find favor with the people.

"But our school is so poor that we cannot afford a Home Department. Yes, there are many that we might reach, but we have no money to make the beginning and buy the necessary supplies."

Facts go to show that the Home Department is frequently the best financial department of the

school. It will pay to borrow the necessary money for the first supplies. Some of the denominational publishing houses send a sufficient quantity of supplies free to schools in order to start a department. Rightly managed, no Home Department should be an expense to the school, but on the other hand, should yield a good income. People are glad to contribute of their means to things that are worth while. A dear Scotch lady, who worked for her living, always put a silver dollar in her envelope each quarter. When the Visitor, knowing the conditions, timidly suggested that it was too much, and that a smaller amount would do as well, the lady said: "Nae, nae, 'tis little enough; such a comfort as it is to me to feel that I can keep along with the bairns in their Sunday-school even if I cannot go along. I belong and they know I do. When they get to be mithers, they can belong to the school, too, and they will, for they like to do everything mither does now, bless them!"

"There are a good many we might reach, but we have no one to do the work. All our people who can work are already overburdened." Yes, some are overburdened, but with cares, even though they are "church cares" that are of minor importance. Sewing circles, church fairs, suppers galore, festivals—all these may have their place, but they should always be subservient

to the distinctive work for which the church stands, the teaching and preaching of his Word by precept and example, the close following of the two great commandments, his redemptive work. For all this the Home Department work stands.

There must be those in every church who are willing to "walk and talk that they may win some" to love his Word and his church. All that they need is the wise discrimination of the correct values of work; the "putting of first things first." The following has helped many a one to decide this rather difficult thing. "Spanning the entrance to the cathedral in Milan are three beautiful arches. Over the first, is sculptured a wreath of roses with these words inscribed: 'All that which pleases is but for a moment.' Over the third arch is sculptured a cross and these words: 'All that which troubles is but for a moment.' Over the grand central arch are these words: 'That only is important which is eternal.'" No place is too remote, no difficulty is too great, to make good Home Department work possible. Given one interested person to lead in the work and the work will succeed.

CHAPTER III

ITS MEMBERS : HOW SECURED

There are many good people who have a strong prejudice against the Home Department. They say that it makes it possible, even commendable, for one to join the Home Department when they might just as well become members of the regular school and attend its sessions. The following facts should be carefully borne in mind. No present member of a school is ever asked to leave the school and join the Home Department. True, some of necessity do leave the school and join the Home Department; but no one would ask them not to do so, as, were it not for this department, they would be debarred from all membership and fellowship of the school. On the other hand, we find that where one person leaves the school to join the Home Department, six leave the Home Department to join the school. The Home Department is no refuge for the lazy class; lesson study is the chief requirement for membership. Too many scholars never look at their lesson until they enter the class on Sunday. Home study is not yet universal on the part of the regular pupil.

OUR MEMBERS:—We have the right to expect that all our church members will be enrolled as members of the “Bible study department of the church,” the Sunday-school. The first clause of Bishop Vincent’s unparalleled definition of the Sunday-school gives us our premise — “The Sunday-school is a department of the church of Christ.” How can we secure the Sunday-school membership of all of our church-members ?

One department tried the following plan with gratifying results; hundreds of Departments have since used the same plan, which in several instances has brought perfect success. The superintendent of the Home Department called the Visitors together for conference and prayer. The pastor and the superintendent of the school were present, and each commended the work and commissioned the Visitors to make their canvass for members by the authority of the church and school. The names of all the church members not in the Sunday-school were divided among the Visitors. The names of the non-resident or absent members were given to the Visitor who liked to write letters. Every member was then interviewed or written to, regarding the proposed campaign for “raising the standard of Bible study on the part of the church members” and, as the best way of bring-

ing this about was membership in the Sunday-school, the invitation to join the school was given. Many could not join—the mothers with the babies to care for, nurses, physicians, men and women whose occupation precluded all such attendance upon the school, the sick, the aged, those who lived so far from the school that they could not attend with any degree of regularity. To all such the Home Department was explained as the new department making their membership possible.

To make a thorough and inclusive report one Visitor adopted the following unique, and, with her, original plan. She ruled and headed her canvass report sheet thus:

NAME	REGULAR ATTENDANT	SHUT-IN	SHUT-OUT	WON'T

The names of the twenty people on her list were written in the proper column. She told of the plan and of the new department and then, showing her report blank, she explained that they must be reported in some one of the columns. "We would love to have you come to the school, and if you will, I will put a cross opposite

your name in the column of 'Regular Attendant.' If you are a 'Shut-in,' we will bring the Sunday-school to you through the Home Department. If you have to work on Sunday, you are a 'Shut-out,' but you can belong through the Home Department. Of course if you will not come to the school or allow us to bring the school to you, I shall have to put you in the 'Won't' column. Perhaps I ought to tell you that Dr. R— and Dr. B— have to see this report, as well as Mrs. S—." She secured three "shut-ins" and two "shut-outs" for the Home Department, and the other fifteen promised to come into the main school. In five weeks' time, every one of the fifteen was in the school, one as department superintendent, two others as teachers, and the remaining ones as pupils. The "Won't" columns are carefully avoided.

Next we want "every member of every family represented by the pupils in our school." In every Sunday-school there are children with whose parents we are little or not at all acquainted. There are big brothers and sisters whose membership in our organized classes we covet. There are grandparents whose friendship we should prize, if we knew them. The Home Department Visitor may realize all this for the school in the canvass; but there is yet "a more excellent way."

ONE WAY TO BEGIN.—The Home Department workers, with the officers and teachers of the school, spend an evening together conferring about the work. Every teacher is made to understand the work, to see its opportunities, and to grow enthusiastic over the possibilities. Then their co-operation is asked for and secured. Each teacher pledges herself to be responsible for securing the Home Department members in the families of her pupils. In large classes additional Visitors may be secured to aid the teacher, and these additional Visitors report their calls to the teacher as well as to the Home Department superintendent, so that the teacher may be familiar with the home surroundings of her pupils.

The following Sunday the teachers use some time in explaining the Home Department plan to their pupils and in urging them to try, and to continue trying, until every member of their family belongs to the Sunday-school. Each pupil is given a letter of invitation and explanation and an application card to take home for use in his "home mission" work. At the close of the school a brief inspiring talk on the subject is given by the pastor or some Home Department expert, which helps to increase the enthusiasm of the school. If possible get this motto and hang on the wall of your school-room: "Every

member of every family a member of some department of our Sunday-school." Every Sunday call for results. Let the teacher give the number of members secured by her pupils. A healthy rivalry will thus be stimulated. Some schools have a membership contest in connection with the Home Department plan, and, wisely managed, this is found to be very helpful.

In one school there were two classes of boys of the same grade; seven boys in each class. They were wildly enthusiastic over the plan. At last here was something that they could do. They counted up and found there were thirty-three non-Sunday-school members represented by the families of one class and thirty-one in the other. Unwilling to make the concession of two in the result, operations were suspended for one week. The next Sunday all were jubilant. "We've fixed it all right now. Harold's mother has taken two boarders and neither of them go to Sunday-school; and now we're even, thirty-three each, and just watch us go it!"

If this method is used in place of the ordinary canvass (which is not to be underrated at all) you gain several important points which make for success. First, the school knows the work, and just what the Department stands for. Second, you have wonderfully increased the working force of your school. Third, you have made it

easy for the teachers to know the home environment of their pupils. Fourth, you have elevated the tone of your school. No one can think it merely a place for the children and, it may be, the mothers, but it is the place for the fathers and big brothers and every one.

Then we seek for members in our institutions: fraternity homes, homes for the aged, soldiers' and sailors' homes, asylums, prisons, fire stations, police stations, lighthouses, life-saving stations, homes of refuge, navy and military camps, on ocean liners and sailing vessels, in hotels, telephone offices, telegraph stations, railroad offices and electric car terminals, etc. Wherever there are those who for any reason are out of fellowship with us we try to reach them. If the interest and co-operation of those who are in authority in these places is first secured,—and, if they are not members of some Sunday-school, their membership secured for the Home Department,—it is not at all difficult to secure the membership of the employees. For a century we have been giving our best thought to those who come to us. Now let us turn our thought and effort to those who are as yet unreached.

Our Thought—For others.

Our Purpose—Until all are reached.

CHAPTER IV

ITS WORKERS : THEIR QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES

Upon the working force of the Home Department, the results depend. The Superintendent and requisite number of Visitors constitute the working force of the average Department. In a large Department a secretary and treasurer (usually one person can fill both offices) and substitute Visitors are added. The happiest and most progressive Departments have the additional help of the Messenger Service and the Sunshine Band.

The Superintendent

The qualifications of a superintendent are summed up in three telling words by Mr. C. D. Meigs, the warm-hearted champion of the Home Department, as grace, grit, gumption. These qualifications are essential. Add to a true spiritual life, loving persistency, quiet tact, adaptability, executive ability ; and round about all, like a golden band, a great belief in, and love for, this phase of Christian work, and you have the right kind of superintendent.

“ Who makes the better superintendent, a man

or a woman ?” This question is too delicate for a direct answer. In New England seventy-five per cent. of the superintendents are women and twenty-five per cent. are men. The latter percentage is increasing, and it is noticeable that the departments superintended by men are among the best in all lines—especially Visitation. When a man superintendent gives out the quarterlies and report envelopes to the Visitors and says, “I shall expect a full report from you this quarter,” he usually gets it. Whereas when a woman superintendent says the same thing, it often happens that the Visitors “make excuse,” knowing that she will understand. On the other hand, women gave up long ago making excuses to the “lords of creation,” realizing their utter inability ever to understand.

Duties of the Superintendent.—(1.) To pray.—A praying superintendent never fails to be a good superintendent. He does not rely on his own strength or wisdom; he prays for himself, his helpers, his members, and the church. (2.) To plan.—He plans for the canvassing campaigns for members; for meetings of all kinds for members and workers; for training courses for the Visitors; for the group divisions of the members into “classes”; for the socials and receptions for the members; for the attendance of the members on the special days of the school and church; for

conferences; for everything that shall help his department to grow in numbers, efficiency, and strength. Above all, the superintendent shall plan very carefully the evangelistic part of the work of the department. No superintendent ought to be satisfied until every member of the department becomes a member of the church.

(3.) To preach.—He never loses an opportunity to present the work. He makes full quarterly and annual reports, and reads them himself, to the school. That superintendent is unwise who commits his report to the secretary of the school to read. The secretary has not lived the report; he cannot, therefore, give it to the school with the right emphasis. It is not a mere statistical report; it ought to be replete with incidents that make the figures live before the school. If it is an innovation in your school to have a department superintendent read his own report, now is a good time to begin.

(4.) To practise.—He always practises all that he preaches. Every superintendent should, if possible, have a small class that he may know by experience just what his Visitors are encountering.

(5.) To persuade.—He should be continually persuading people to join as members, as workers. He should try to persuade that church across the way to take up the work, promising his help in starting if needed; he should persuade the super-

intendents in his city or township that union Home Department conferences in the city or township would be mutually helpful. (6.) To push.—He should be continually vigilant; always on the lookout to find some better plan of doing things; always trying to raise a little higher the standard of work being done; always seeking the best good of all. His watchword should be “Forward.”

The Visitors

The Visitors of the Home Department need to have the same spirit as the superintendent, plus a willingness to serve in all possible ways. The superintendent plans, and on their co-operation in carrying out the plans depends very largely the success of the Department. The great majority of the Visitors are women, for they, as a rule, have the greater command of their time. With the men in the police, fire, railroad, and electric car-stations coming in as members, the need of men to become Visitors is apparent. The Visitor has the duty and privilege of prayer. One Visitor said that she never went out to call on her members without first asking definitely for guidance in word and action in each particular case. At the beginning of the year she had eight in her class, and not one of them was a church member; at the close of the second year, every one of them had united with the church. Each

Visitor should be an inspirational friend to her superintendent; a true friend to every member of her class. They should make their calls regularly and be prompt in securing reports from the members and in giving the reports to the superintendent. They should be prompt in delivering the lesson helps and all material for the members. A postal card sent to each member in advance of the call will ensure the "at homeness" of the members, thus saving much of the time and strength of the Visitor.

They should study their classes as individuals and as a class and seek to meet the need of both instances. They should keep the pastor, Home Department superintendent and general superintendent informed of all cases calling for their co-operation. Each Visitor should be continually seeking new members, and stimulating their members to help them.

A Visitor had a member who lived at such a distance that she was obliged to hire a team and drive when she made her quarterly call. The member was a quiet little woman who had but little to say, and was in every way most diffident. The Visitor determined that after the next call she would send the quarterly by mail, and not go so far when she felt that she was not especially helping the woman. A postal sent the day before always ensured that the woman would be at home

waiting for her. This day the little woman had her bonnet and shawl on when the Visitor drove up. She made this explanation with some difficulty : " You see, I am not much of a hand to talk or to express myself, but I feel just as much, and you have done me so much good, coming out here and telling me all about the doings at the church and school. You said next time but one to the last that you came, that you were trying to get some more members, and I thought perhaps I could help you, so I've been round the neighborhood out here. The folks have been interested in your visits and when I told them about you and our Sunday-school I found that they would like to belong, too, and so, in the seven homes just around here, I have gotten sixteen of the folks to join. Here are their application cards, all signed. I sent for them so as to give you a surprise. Now I thought that we would go and call in each home so that you could see the folks in their own surroundings ; but after this time, we have agreed to be all together in one home when you make your call, so that you will only have to come out once for the seventeen of us, and perhaps stay to tea."

No quarterlies were sent by mail there, and the Visitor learned the lesson that we may all learn, that we must not judge by appearances alone as to the appreciation of our work.

CHAPTER V

ITS RELATIONSHIPS

The relation of the Home Department to the school, as regards rank, corresponds to any other department, the junior, the primary, etc. If a school has the beginners, primary, junior, intermediate, senior, adult, and Home Departments, that school has seven departments. Many such say, "We have six departments and the Home Department." It would be better to say, "We have seven departments including the Home Department." Inasmuch as it is a physical impossibility to see the Cradle Roll and Home Department each Sunday, it may be wisest to mention these two by name when giving the number of departments in the school.

The superintendent ranks equally with the primary or any other department superintendent, and is entitled to all the privileges common to the department superintendents on the official board of the school. The Visitors rank equally with the teachers in the main school, and are equal in obligation, recognition and privilege. The members rank equally with the members of the main school in enrolment, membership, use of

library, lesson helps, recognition, special days, and even place. Each member should feel that whenever it is possible for her to attend the session of the school there is a place for her.

Much confusion has arisen because of the apparent discrepancy between statistics and appearance. For example, when a visitor asked the superintendent the membership of his school, he said, "Four hundred"; the visitor then looked at the school and said, "Is this your average attendance?" "Yes, we have one hundred and eighty here to-day; that is about our average, and I call it good." Noticing the expression on the visitor's face, the superintendent bethought himself and said hastily, "Our main school numbers two hundred and our Cradle Roll and Home Department as many more. We have four hundred members in all." That put a new aspect on the case. The first statement was absolutely true, but very misleading. Wise superintendents or secretaries in giving the statistics of their schools will give the enrolment of the main school, enrolment of the Cradle Roll, and enrolment of the Home Department, specifying each, and then say, "Our grand total membership is ——." It is "grand," too, to have the Sunday-school membership reach from the cradle to the end of life; let us put ourselves beyond criticism by giving "grand totals."

The relationship with the superintendent of the school is mutual in its character. The Home Department is equally subject with the other departments to his jurisdiction. He has the right to expect from members and workers the fullest co-operation. This department should claim his thought and study, and he should be ready to criticise and help. Many a general superintendent has very greatly endeared himself to the Home Department members by sending each a little note of remembrance on his or her birthday.

This department is really the immediate "home mission" effort of the church. The Visitors have a glorious opportunity to magnify the church and all its interests in the homes of their members. In many churches there are special Home Department pews for the members, with a welcome committee to wait on them, this committee being so designated by badges as to be easily distinguished. The pastor finds in the workers a band of willing assistants. When they report special cases of need, speedy relief is assured. Many an overworked pastor has found that the organization of a Home Department has halved his labors, instead of doubling them, as he had feared.

The pastor can greatly aid the department by having, at least once each year, a "Home Department Sunday," when as many as possible of

the members shall be brought to the church to listen to a sermon prepared especially for them. The pastor can make it a point to attend all gatherings of the department and all the meetings of the workers. Truly, the first thing to be secured to ensure the success of any department is the active, sympathetic co-operation of the pastor.

The relation of this department to the home is very close. It brings in Christian influences; it unites and unifies family interests; it brings people similarly situated into helpful relations with each other; it establishes and re-establishes family altars; it dignifies and aids in giving the Sunday-school its proper rating in the mind of the family; it helps more than any other known agency of the church or school to preserve, to conserve, and to magnify the family and the home, and so to keep the honor and integrity of the very foundations of the state and nation.

CHAPTER VI

HOW TO ORGANIZE A HOME DEPARTMENT

Many people attend a Sunday-school convention and hear an address on this department. They get a view of its possibilities, suggestions of results, and go home delighted with the idea, but with little knowledge of how to go to work to start a department in their own school. This chapter is written for just such people; those who know just enough about the work to desire it for their own school, but who do not know the "how" of it. A careful observance of the following six I's will ensure the organization of a department that cannot fail to be a great source of strength to the school and community.

(1) Inform.—Read everything that you can lay hold of about the work. The Sunday School Times has a whole page of suggestive incidents, plans, and reports each month. If you are eligible to membership in the Field Workers' Department of the International Sunday-school Association, join, and subscribe to the state and provincial Sunday-school papers. Nearly all have interesting and instructive reports of the work. No two departments are

alike, and the knowledge of the work done in Maine, California, Texas, Illinois, and all the country between, plus the splendid work being done in Canada, gives one the necessary wide view of the work that breeds a continual enthusiasm. All our denominational and interdenominational publishing houses have their own descriptive leaflets and necessary requisites which may be had for study upon application. Our strong teachers' magazines have space devoted to this department, filled with instructive and interesting matter. Read Meigs' "Blue Book"; Harriet Walden's "How Standstill was Moved"; "The Boynton Neighborhood" and "The Home Department of the Sunday School," published by the Pilgrim Press; study carefully the leaflet published by The Sunday School Times Company, "How to Start and How to Stock a Home Department."

Then talk with those who have had experience in the work. Seek invitations to all the Home Department gatherings you may know of, be their nature social or instructive. Much information may be gained by attending a Visitors' meeting, a Home Department conference, institute, social, or anniversary service.

(2) Instruct.—Share your knowledge of the work with those whose co-operation you seek. Inasmuch as the pastor is the recognized head of

all church activities by virtue of his office, his co-operation should be the first to be sought. That this be secured is of vital importance to any department. "What is the first thing to be secured to ensure success?" This question is often asked, and from experience we answer, not a superintendent or Visitors, valuable as they are; the success primarily depends upon the hearty, sympathetic interest and true whole-souled co-operation of the pastor of the church. Secondly, secure the interest and co-operation of the superintendent, teachers and officers of the school; and, thirdly, the same spirit of interest and co-operation on the part of the school. No department can fully succeed when it is not known and recognized by every member of the school.

(3) Inspire.—Inspiration is essential in the organizing of this department. Not only for those whose help we seek, but those to whom we may minister, the members of the congregation. Have the pastor explain the plan and its workings and results to his congregation some Sunday morning, and urge upon his people a hearty support of the work that they are about to undertake. If the pastor would rather have some one else, such as a Home Department expert, explain the plan, he can, at the close of the address, commend it, urge its organization and plead for a united interest in it. In the evening the pastor

can help by preaching a sermon on the importance of Bible study by every individual. If some worker presents the plan for the pastor on a Sunday morning, he should also address very briefly the regular Sunday-school session. At the close of such an address a little lad raised his hand; on being asked what he wanted, he said, "Do you mean that he (pointing to the pastor) and he (pointing to the superintendent) wants my father to belong to my Sunday-school when he works on the railroad and has to run every Sunday? Can he belong like you have said?" The worker said, "Yes, pastor and superintendent want father to belong very much, and this plan makes it perfectly possible; will you help us get father?" "Well," said the lad, "I can make father do almost anything if I keep at him long enough, and I will start right in on this, and I'll get him, sure." Many fathers have been reached by boys who have been thus inspired with the thought that their Sunday-school was for father and that they might be the one to secure his membership.

(4) Institute.—We are ready now that we have information, instruction and inspiration to institute this department as a regular department of the school. This should be done just as is the custom in your school,—brought before the school through the official board and the recom-

mentation adopted by the school, voted upon by the school, or just as your custom dictates. The superintendent should be elected by the official board, and then the superintendent and board select and elect the Visitors and such auxiliary helpers as may be deemed necessary. The necessary supplies should be secured from your denominational publishing house, ready to be given to each Visitor.

(5) Install.—To aid in giving the proper sense of responsibility and dignity to the work an installation service of the workers is strongly recommended. This is most effective when most simple. It may properly come at the close of a Sunday morning service, or at the opening or closing service of the Sunday-school. We believe that at the close of the church service is the better time and place. At the close of an appropriate sermon, after a few introductory and explanatory remarks upon the character of the work that is to be done, the workers are asked to come forward. They stand before the altar and the pastor gives them their commission, so to speak, exalts their work, and in their name and his own bespeaks for them and the work the hearty sympathetic co-operation of all. He gives to each the hand of fellowship. The superintendent of the school makes a few remarks about the school, and his hopes for its future growth,

now that so many new helpers are coming into the field, and on behalf of the school extends to each the right hand of fellowship. The congregation is asked to rise while the prayer of consecration is offered by the pastor, closing with the benediction. The service is not designed to be spectacular, but solemn, impressive, and helpful. By this means the members of the congregation know who the workers are; they know that the church and school heartily sanction the work; they are thus made to "think on these things," and are prepared for what is to follow, namely,

(6) Ingather.—The last step in the organization is the securing of members. (See chapter III.) The logical order of canvass is (a) church members; (b) families represented by pupils in the Sunday-school; (c) a house-to-house canvass by districts; (d) canvass of institutions; (e) correspondence canvass for all absentees.

CHAPTER VII

SUPPLIES, AND HOW TO USE THEM

The best system is the most simple. There need be no intricate system of bookkeeping or multiplication of requisites in Home Department work. A full complement of supplies can be obtained from any denominational publishing house. It is absolutely necessary to have the supplies mentioned in starting a Home Department. Experience teaches that the majority of schools purchase on the basis of supplies for twenty-five members for a beginning, but almost invariably have to double their order before the close of the first quarter.

One superintendent's record-book.

Twelve Visitors' class reports.

Twelve Visitors' canvas blanks. (These may be home-made if preferred.)

Fifty application cards.

Fifty report and collection envelopes.

Fifty descriptive leaflets.

Fifty quarterlies or lesson helps.

Many Departments use in addition a membership certificate. The certificates that have places for the signature of the pastor, Sunday-school

and Home Department superintendents, are often highly prized. The Messenger certificates and cards of introduction and badges can also be obtained. Some publishing houses have report cards and collection envelopes. For the average Department, however, it is wiser to combine the two in the report and collection envelope. The letters of invitation and explanation are invaluable when using the plan of reaching the families through the pupils. There are other supplies issued, but they are of secondary importance. Several state Sunday-school associations issue requisites of their own, fitted for their own fields, but adapted to any. New Jersey and Ohio lead in the publication of literature and supplies along Home Department lines.

It will greatly expedite the quarterly work of distributing the lesson helps, if they are ordered sent direct to the Home Department superintendent. The superintendent writes the name and address of each member on the quarterly and envelope, and by using a tiny sticker makes it impossible for the envelope to be lost. Separate the quarterlies thus prepared and send to each Visitor, and with each the Visitor's report record. The Visitor receives the last quarter's envelope when she gives the new quarterly. When all have been received she transfers the record of study and offering from the envelopes to her

report record, and sends the record and money directly to the superintendent. The superintendent transfers the Visitor's report to her own book and when all are in, writes her quarterly report. The superintendent keeps the Visitor's class records until time to send out the next quarter's lesson helps. Some Visitors prefer to keep a book of their own, and Visitors' class books, as well as class records, are obtainable.

Lesson Helps.—It is now possible to secure a Home Department quarterly from any of our large denominational and interdenominational publishing houses. These are all good, but sometimes they are not the best for our Home Department. If many members are at a distance from the church—and we often find whole families who, because of distance, belong to the Home Department—one subscription to *The Sunday-school Times* furnishes each grade in that family class with the lesson specially prepared for them. *The World Evangel* does the same. In addition to the lesson helps, the news of the Sunday-school world is found in these two publications. Then there are those who are desirous of further research than our quarterlies give us, and to them a teachers' monthly is more helpful. Some members are almost strangers to the study habit and require very simple helps; the Junior quarterly and Junior teachers' magazine are often the best

help that we can give to such. It is not necessary that the same grade of helps be used throughout the department, but it is desirable that all study the same lesson. If the main school is studying some other system than the International, unless the department prefers otherwise, better work can be accomplished by giving the International system to the Home Department, because of the multiplicity of helps on this system.

Application cards.—Do not insist on the members signing the lesson study pledge; it is a good thing to get the signature, but if one is, as many are, unwilling to “sign themselves” to any pledge and are willing to give their verbal promise, take them as members.

Report envelopes.—One of the chief means of determining the character of our work is by the report of lesson study as marked on the record envelope. We are glad of the free will offering in the envelope, but that is of secondary importance to the record of lesson study. If the Visitor finds that the lesson study is not marked, let her explain that the superintendent has to give a report of the department to the school each quarter. Each lesson studied counts just the same as the attendance of the pupils in the main school, hence the superintendent must have the study record, or give in an incomplete report. The Visitor can mark the envelope for the mem-

ber after learning how many lessons have been studied. In case the envelope has become mislaid, it is always wise for the Visitor to have an extra envelope with her.

Library books.—Many Sunday-schools have fine libraries which the Home Department members would greatly enjoy. By using the double card system and a good corps of messengers, the members can enjoy all library privileges.

Badges.—An attractive pin button badge may be used for the Home Department members. These badges are procured of the publishing houses. It is seldom worn except at receptions, or socials, or on special days when each department is thus designated.

CHAPTER VIII

HOME DEPARTMENT CLASSES

Just as the departments in the main school are subdivided into classes, so the Home Department is subdivided into groups, which correspond with the classes in the main school. The word "class" implies a teacher; the word "group" implies a leader; and as the latter is true to the nature of the Home Department work, the terminology, though new, might well be used. But inasmuch as the word "class" is used by all the publishers of our supplies, and we are accustomed to its usage, the word "class" will be adhered to. Care should be taken not to confound the Home Department class with the home class work which is found to be so successful in many places.

There are five kinds of classes in the Home Department:

I. THE INDIVIDUAL CLASS, where the class is composed of one in a family who belongs to the Home Department. The average Visitor can care for seven such in her class.

In the B. household every one but Grandma belonged to the Sunday-school, and she did want

to so much. When the school inaugurated the Home Department, Grandma joined, and when the rest of the family were at church and school, Grandma had her Sunday-school all by herself. She had the order of service and she knew the lesson, but she made believe recite it to an imaginary teacher. She sang the hymns that went with the lesson, and if she did sing off the key there was no one to criticise. She knew that there were six others who were visited by the same delightful lady that called on her and that together they were a real class. If she was especially impressed with some point in the lesson she would write about it to Mrs. G. who belonged to her class. Every week she would write to some member and receive at least one letter herself. Of course she was a "shut-in," but she was not "counted out" because of that, and that means much to such people.

2. **THE FAMILY CLASS**, where two or more members of the family belong to the Department and study the lesson together.

Mr. G. was an engineer on the railroad. He got home about noon each Sunday. He belonged to the Home Department, and so did his wife. The three-months-old baby belonged to the Cradle Roll and the two boys were in the Sunday-school. Mr. G. would "wash up" and eat his lunch, and then, with his wife, would study the lesson of the day together by the baby's cradle. Often after the lesson had been talked over, with their Bibles on their knees, they would talk of the children and their hopes for them. He al-

ways waited until the lads came home from the school to greet them and hear of the teachings they had received, and then went to bed for his hard-earned rest.

3. THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLASS, where several families in the neighborhood belong to the Department and come together for their lesson study. Neighborhood classes are greatly liked in the country districts.

There were eight members of the Department living within a block of each other. None of them seemed to have a great interest in the work. They were all old ladies and all had grandchildren. The Visitor asked them all to meet her at her home, which was within the block and they had a social hour together. She broached the plan of their meeting round at one another's homes each week to study the lesson together and to talk over various items of interest that would be common. They were delighted with the plan and at once put it into operation. The neighborhood class was a success. They enjoyed it so much that others in that neighborhood who could not attend the sessions of the school asked to come in, and in five months the class grew to twenty-five. One afternoon a week they meet for social fellowship and at the Sunday-school hour on Sunday they meet for their Bible study. Once in a while they have the pleasure of a visit from the Sunshine Band, and they believe that no class is more favored than their neighborhood class.

4. THE CORRESPONDENCE CLASS is composed of those who are non-resident and absent members; letters take the place of calls and reports, and supplies are sent by mail.

Jack B. had always belonged to the Sunday-school and was a good boy, although he had never made any public confession of his religion. When he joined the army and was sent to the Philippines, many said that he was leaving behind all the good influences and would surely come to ruin in that country. But the superintendent got Jack to join the Home Department, and when he went away his Bible and quarterly went with him. Every month the correspondence Visitor wrote him a long chatty letter about the boys and girls at the church and the news of home. After Jack had been away six months he wrote home: "I am glad that I have had something to help me keep straight. Many of the fellows here were decent enough chaps at home, but down here they do not seem to think that it matters whether they are clean or not. I might be tempted myself—one gets so homesick, and really desperate, at times; but the knowledge that the folks at home and especially the people at church have faith in me, and trust me, and then, the study of the Book that always helps one, have kept me straight so far and I know that it will continue to do so, if I am faithful."

Grace S. was going abroad to study music. She was full of ambition and her mother had fears that she would let her ambition crowd out all the higher traits of her character. One of

Grace's intimate friends was the correspondence Visitor and she got Grace to join the correspondence class of the Home Department. She asked Grace to keep a journal and write a little every Sunday for the benefit of the members who would never see Germany. The letters began to come, and letters were sent, and in a letter that Grace wrote to her mother she said: "I never realized what a helpful thing it was to be, to me, to be a member of the Home Department. Sunday is something of a gala day in our little club, and sometimes things are done that I know would not meet with your approval, but I have asked to be excused from the Sunday dinners and fêtes that are so common to the students here, and I really think that I enjoy writing out the things that are worth while, for the dear ones at home, much more than for the 'good times' of my friends."

5. THE SCHOOL CLASS. There are many members of the Home Department who can occasionally attend the sessions of the school. For such it is fitting that some special place be reserved, and a regular teacher provided.

In one school a small room was set apart for this class, and a vase of flowers always breathed a welcome to the members. The teacher always used the lecture method, giving time for the members of the class to question him at the close. This became one of the most popular classes of the school. Every member of the Home Department that could, found her way

to the school Home Department class as often as possible. Husbands accompanied their wives and thus became interested in the school. A school Home Department class is rather paradoxical, but it is practicable.

CHAPTER IX

VISITORS' MEETINGS

The Need—An interchange of experience is always helpful. One Visitor meets a problem that another Visitor has solved. The superintendent has certain definite things that he would like to have done. He must call his Visitors together. The pastor has some special work that he would like to have the Visitors do. That all these needs and many others may be met, every Department should hold quarterly meetings of the superintendent and Visitors, and, of course, the pastor and general superintendent of the Sunday-school will meet with them as *ex officio* members.

Place and time—The place can be best decided by local conditions. In the city church the meetings are often held in the small hall or ladies' parlor of the Y. M. C. A., as it is always sufficiently comfortable in winter, when it would mean an added expense to the church to start a fire for just an afternoon. The meetings may be held in the church parlor, the homes of the workers, or at the parsonage. One is sure of a full attendance if the summer and fall meetings can combine business and pleasure in the way of an

outing. The time should be definitely stated, such a day of the week of the quarter. Many Departments prefer to hold their quarterly meetings during next to the last week of the quarter, when the superintendent may give them their supplies. Other Departments prefer to hold their meetings the second week of the quarter, when they can hand their reports to the superintendent.

One of the Visitors should be appointed secretary, to act during these meetings and to send postal reminders of date and place if there is no regular Department secretary. Some Departments hold their quarterly meetings at the close of the mid-week prayer service, others at the close of the session of the school. At the best, these meetings must be hurried, and the work hastily reviewed; hence this time and place is not recommended for the best results.

Suggestive Program—(a) Devotional service led by the superintendent or pastor; (b) minutes of the last meeting, by the secretary; (c) reports from each Visitor; (d) open parliament for all; (e) suggestions and advice by superintendent; (f) talk by the pastor and superintendent. If the Messenger Service or the Sunshine Band is used to aid the Home Department work, reports should be received from the leaders of these two auxiliary helps, and suggestions for service given

them. A simple afternoon tea may be served. This is not at all essential, but it always promotes sociability and good comradeship between the workers.

A Suggestion—In a town where there were four churches there was but one Home Department, and that one was not at all progressive. The workers did not fully realize their responsibility or opportunity, and there was an absolute absence of all enthusiasm. The superintendent invited her Visitors, the pastor, and the officers and teachers of the school, and the pastor and superintendents of the other three schools, with their wives, to a basket picnic at the near-by lake. The invitations were very generally accepted. The superintendent of a wide-awake earnest Department in another city was asked to join the party and tell of the work being done in her Department, with a view of stimulating an interest in the work on the part of all. If the Visitors are not so keenly alive to the responsibilities of the work as might be desired, an address by some worker from outside is often just the needed stimulus. This proved true in the case just cited. The work was made known to the three pastors, and they were delighted with the account of the work being done in the neighboring city, and were anxious to see if the same results might not be had in their own churches. The superin-

tendents saw possibilities of greatly increasing the membership and strengthening the work of their schools, and the Home Department workers saw how far short they had come of realizing the opportunities that were constantly before them, and pledged themselves to more earnest work.

CHAPTER X

THE MESSENGER SERVICE

The Messenger Service is an organization of boys between ten and sixteen years of age, who volunteer to serve the church and school in any and all possible ways, and pledge themselves to the faithful performance of their duties.

The question has arisen in the minds of some as to the difference between the Messenger Service and the Messenger Department. The work has been deemed by some schools to be of such worth that it has been incorporated as a regular department of the school, with a superintendent to care for it. A few state Sunday-school associations have done the same thing, and, in place of a service, it has become a distinct department of the state association. The nature of the work is essentially the same. The Departments demand more complete organization than the simple service. The idea is prevalent that the Messenger Service belongs solely to the Home Department, and the Messenger Department to the entire school. This is erroneous. The Messenger Service came into existence primarily to serve the members of the Home Department, but

in three weeks from its organization the Messengers were distributing invitation cards for the pastor throughout the city and aiding various Sunday-school committees; the Home Department has never tried to monopolize the service. Because of the value of the service to the Home Department, and because of the lack of leadership so often found in our churches, the Home Department workers have been more largely instrumental in organizing and caring for the Messenger Service than any other agency in the school.

The first organized Messenger Service was organized in the First Baptist Church, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in February, 1899, to meet a fourfold need: to bring the members of the Home Department into weekly touch with the church and school; to make the boys feel a sense of responsibility for the work of the Sunday-school; to train the boys in Christian work; to teach them to be continually on the watch for opportunities to serve the King.

Requirements—To be a Sunday-school Messenger one must be:

(a) A member in good and regular standing of the Sunday-school.

(b) Clean in speech and action; he must never use obscene or profane language; he must not be mean or do mean things.

(c) Punctual and regular in attendance upon all the Messenger meetings.

(d) Temperate: He must never use tobacco or alcoholic liquors. One boy greatly desired to become a Sunday-school Messenger. His chum was one, and he wanted to do everything that his chum did. He smoked cigarettes and his petition was refused, and the reason given him. "Can't I never be a Messenger, 'less I quit cigarettes?" "No, my boy, our boys are working for a King who hates all filthiness and uncleanness. His Messengers have to be clean and temperate in all things." "If I leave off smoking, will you take me?" "Yes, if you are willing to prove to us that you truly mean to leave off, and do." He promised, and was put on three weeks' probation. He nobly kept his word, was accepted as a Messenger, and not only was his work a delight to himself and a source of help and joy to the school, but to the boy's family. In a note that the boy's father wrote to us was the following sentence: "You are helping to make a fine man of Jack, and I have given up my cigars to make it easier for him and to help him along." Many times we have proved that honest effort to strengthen and build the boy's character has often reached farther than just to the boy himself.

The Messenger must do (a) all service

promptly; (b) all service cheerfully; (c) make complete reports at the stated times; (d) must wear his badge only when on duty (e) must at all times conduct himself as a King's Messenger.

The service is entirely volunteer; no boy is ever drafted. After he volunteers, if he is willing to promise to do his best to live up to the requirements, the appointment of the Messenger is ratified by the school upon the recommendation of the official board. He is given a certificate of his appointment and his badge of service. These certificates and badges are issued by several Sunday-school publishing houses. Many schools prefer to more fully localize their work, and so issue their own certificates and badges. When a state association incorporates a Messenger Department it issues its own certificates, badges, rules, constitutions, etc. Indiana and Colorado have a fine line of Messenger requisites, samples of which may be obtained from the state Sunday-school headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Denver, Colorado.

To dignify the work and help the workers, a simple installation service for the Messengers is often used. This usually takes place at the close of the school session, before the entire school. The boys are called to the platform and the superintendent of the school explains the nature of their work, tells them of his plans and hopes

for the school, and his pleasure in their willingness and ability to help him. He gives each boy a hearty handshake and his certificate of appointment. The pastor then speaks for the church and for the King whose Messengers they are, and places on each boy's coat the badge of service. The school is asked to rise and stand with the Messengers during the prayer of consecration, which is brought to a close with the benediction.

Work for the Home Department.—The Messenger may carry the church calendar, Sunday-school paper, library book and other literature to the members of the Home Department each Sunday afternoon. In many schools the Home Department superintendent uses the time of the school session to prepare these weekly supplies for the Messengers. When the five minutes' warning bell sounds she takes each boy's bundle to him as he sits in his class. In the First Methodist Church, Chelsea, Massachusetts, the Messengers contrived a "more excellent way." They built a post-office, a frame divided into large square compartments. Each compartment was numbered; each Messenger had a corresponding number. Promptly at ten o'clock each Sunday morning the boys go to the library, where their supplies are awaiting them; they sort them out, place them in the boxes, and at ten-

thirty are ready to march into the church to attend the morning preaching service. At the close of the session each boy takes the contents of his box and, before night, all are delivered.

The boys get well acquainted with their "Home Department members," and often serve them during the week as errand boys. They never refuse any commission, even though it be extremely distasteful, for they are working for One who "pleased not himself." A boy, with a look of grim determination on his face, was seen running along the street one morning. His badge was in evidence, so the superintendent felt at liberty to stop and question him. "Oh, I'm going to try to find a washerwoman for Miss B. She is the fussiest old maid that ever lived ! I've been trying for three weeks to find one that will suit, and I hope to goodness that the one that I am now on the track of will be the right one." When the superintendent, just to try him, suggested that he should let such work go to someone else, he said, "Well, she is the only fussy one I have on my list, and I guess that perhaps she cannot help being that way, and besides, I ain't doing it just to please her, you know."

They are valuable helpers in the social work of the Home Department. In one church they assisted as ushers, waiters and pages at the fall Home Department social. In the spring they

begged the privilege of "giving the social all themselves." No officer of the Home Department was allowed to have anything to do with the work; they were simply to furnish a list of the members and workers, and the date and place of the social. They consented to allow the father of one of the boys to act as counsellor, but they managed everything, soliciting the use of carriages, the food, and the program participants. The social was a great success. The boys were everywhere. Never were pudding sticks more active. The program was unique, the actors all boys. It was very musical; a little Italian boy played the accordion, and his classical selection was "Dolly Gray." A little son of Africa played the banjo, and his selection was "Dolly Gray." The frail little English lad played very sweetly on his violin, and his selection was "Dolly Gray." It was almost too much for the audience, but they enjoyed it hugely, and throughout the evening were well entertained. The refreshments were served in style. This stage whisper indicated the masculine thoughtfulness: "Don't put out any more sandwiches, they've eaten all that's good for them, and there won't be any left for us." Of all the socials given in that church, none was more enjoyed than "The Home Department Social given by our Messenger Service."

“ But our church is so poor and small ; we have no church calendar, but we have a Home Department and we have the boys ; we would like to give the boys some definite work to do ; can we give them this weekly work to do in our present condition ? ” You surely can, and you can have a calendar, too, that will be worth more than any printed one. Organize your Messenger Service and ask the boys to help you make a calendar, as that is the chief thing that you desire to send to the members of the Home Department. It is that which keeps them informed of all the meetings and items of interest in the church. A small hectograph can be obtained for five dollars, and with your copying-ink and the co-operation of the boys and the pastor you can easily have just the kind of a calendar that you desire. In one church the boys desired to buy the hectograph themselves, and so denied themselves all pleasures that would cost and in a few weeks had the money. They waited on the pastor immediately at the close of the morning service, and received from him the notices of the week, took them to their class, and with the help of the teacher the copy was neatly written and the copies made in less than ten minutes. They were all dry and ready for distribution among the Messengers at the close of the session.

Work for the school—The Messengers are most

helpful to the decorating, library, lookout, and concert committees of the Sunday-school. They delight to go into the fields and woods and gather the laurel, daisies, evergreen, etc., for the decorating committee; no step-ladder is too high for them to climb, any number of yards of laurel to be wound does not daunt them; the more work of this kind they have to do, the better pleased they are. They are always willing to call for that long-absent library book, when the librarian fails to secure it by the broadest hints, or even plain requests. To look up the whereabouts of that boy who used to come to Sunday-school and no longer comes, and to find out the reason, is a bit of detective work that every boy loves to do. They are ready to do anything that they can to make the concerts a success; some draw the line at singing, for which we are grateful. There are but few boys who like to "speak pieces" all alone, and at this age they ought not to be asked; but a number of boys to take part in a dialogue just suits them, and is a pleasant change to the audience. Good dialogues, suitable for junior grades, can be secured from the missionary societies.

The boys aid the janitor in caring for the buildings and grounds. They distribute and collect the orders of service, Bibles and hymn-books. They act as ushers for the mid-week prayer service of

the church and at other times when called upon. They call at the parsonage each morning ready to execute any commission given by the pastor or his family. In one town in Indiana the pastor has a peculiar call for the gathering of the Messengers, so many taps of the church bell. In an incredibly short time the boys are with him ready for any given commission. One busy pastor has a fine garden. "How do you find the time to care for it, with all the work that you have to do?" The pastor said, "I do not care for it, but my boys do." "Boys! you have no children, have you?" "No, none of my own, but my Messengers take care of me as well as my own children could do. They come in the spring and dig and plant anything that I say I would like. They come and weed and water. You cannot find a weed in that garden. You know how fine my peas, beans and radishes are. See my cucumbers, tomatoes, and lettuce? My corn promises to be extra fine this year, but a little late." His friend could not quite comprehend, and said, "But do the boys do all this for nothing? What do you give them?" The pastor said: "I give them my love and help just so far as I know how. We are great chums, and they come to me very freely. I would not offer them money, but I pay them by loving, trusting, and working them. Every summer we have them

all come to a garden dinner, and we have our usual camping time for a week ; but the boys do not do their work with any thought of reward in mind other than the knowledge that they are helping me." Many a parsonage lawn is cared for by the Messengers, the walks kept free from snow and ice in the winter, and the flowers and shrubberies carefully tended. It is all a labor of love.

The Sunday-school teachers find that the Messengers are of great service in helping them keep track of their pupils. Many teachers are so situated that they cannot call on their pupils in their homes just when they would like to, and if a pupil is absent and the teacher cannot get to the home to ascertain the reason, it is very helpful to have a boy ready and willing to go for her. In the Washington Street Sunday-school of Toledo, Ohio, of which Mr. Marion Lawrance, the general secretary of the International Sunday School Association, is the honored superintendent, a pad of telegraph blanks has been prepared for the Messengers' use in thus aiding the teacher to keep track of the absentees. So helpful has it proved that we pass the plan on. It is always better for the school to print their own blanks, but where this is not feasible the blank usually can be secured from the denominational publishing houses.

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

The cause of my absence was :.....

I will be present next Sunday if possible.

NAME.....

Form 1

THE MESSENGER SERVICE

Name of Sunday-school.....

Is the Transmitter TO YOU of this Repeated

MESSAGE

NUMBER	SENT BY	RECEIVED BY	PAID	CHECK
				Feb. 10 : 25

DEAR FRIEND :

THIS MESSAGE is handed to you by one of our Messengers to let you know of our regret at your absence from the Sunday-school to-day, and to express the hope that you are not sick. "Every member present every Sunday" is our aim.

Please let us know on the accompanying blank the cause of your absence.

We trust you can be with us next Sunday.

Sincerely Your Superintendent,

If there is no one at home when the message is left this slip is left.

Form 2.

MESSENGER SERVICE SLIP

Dear Friend:—

As a Messenger, I called at your house to-day with a message, which I leave, as I am unable to see you. Will you kindly fill out the blanks as requested and mail to our Superintendent, using the addressed envelope, or if you prefer me to call again for it, please let me know and oblige,

Yours for the Sunday School,

.....Messenger.

No.....Street.

If each teacher had a pad of these blanks in her class all that she would have to do would be to fill in the name of the school and sign the name, address it and have it ready to hand to the Messenger, who makes his returns to the teacher that evening. The use of these telegraph forms provides one of the best possible ways of keeping a high average attendance in the Sunday-school. The writer was in a home one Sunday afternoon when the Messenger called with the telegram. "But," said the mother, "Ethel went to Sunday-school to-day," and she called the child to see what the difficulty might be. "Yes, mamma; but

I did not go to our Sunday-school; I went with Mary." She had been forbidden to attend Mary's Sunday-school, and in this way the misdemeanor was found out by the mother, when, otherwise, it might not have been discovered until the child had been weaned from the church of her parents.

Organization—The scope and character of the work desired to be done will determine the degree of organization necessary. If there are other organizations in the school for boys, boys' brigades, knights of King Arthur, etc., a very simple organization is all that is required. A leader and a few committees are all that are necessary. There need be no formal constitution, just the requirements and duties to serve as by-laws which the Messengers sign. If this is the only organization for boys, then a simple constitution and code of by-laws may be formulated. The leader of the Messenger Service is elected by the official board of the school. He has full charge of the Messenger Service. The best leader is a keen, athletic, spiritual young man. In some instances the physical director of the Y. M. C. A. has the charge of the Messenger Service of his church. These men are ideal leaders, and the same characteristics they possess are found in many other young men; and such a one should be the leader of the Messenger Service.

Officers and committees—The boys may elect their own officers,—a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, and committees. Some prefer to follow military terminology and have captains, lieutenants, sergeants, etc. The committees vary according to conditions. Those so far suggested are: membership, program, meetings, visiting, outing, study, school, social, athletic, and financial.

The membership committee seeks for available members. The meetings committee arranges for time and place of meetings and notifies the members of the same. The program committee arranges the program for all meetings. The visiting committee looks after the sick. The outing committee plans for picnics, tramps, camping, etc. The study committee plans the course of study to be followed. The school committee consists of all the members of the service, one of their number serving as chairman, and he is the one with whom and through whom, the Home Department superintendent plans her share of the work which the members are to do. The social committee arranges for all the meetings of a social character. The athletic committee arranges for sports, games, etc. Many a good base-ball nine, basketball team, and football team can be organized in the Messenger Service. The financial commit-

tee cares for all the moneys of the service, and plans for an income by dues, fines, assessments, exhibitions, entertainments, or by any way deemed advisable by the service.

The leader is a member *ex-officio* of all committees; no vote can be passed over his veto.

Meetings—The members of the Messenger Service come together once in two weeks for their regular meetings. The meetings are devotional, educational, and inspirational. In some places it is found to be wise to have the boys take turns in leading the devotional service; in other places it is wiser for the leader to take charge of this. This is an excellent opportunity to help the boys spiritually, but the greatest of tact must be used. Be careful not to have so much tact, however, that you fail to have contact.

Reports of service rendered are given by each Messenger at each meeting, and a careful record of the same kept by the secretary. Work is planned for the next two weeks, and then the study taken up. This may be lessons in sloyd work or manual training. The boys may be making something for the school or for some of the people whom they serve. It may be that some lawyer may become interested in the boys and teach them the principles of government; they may turn their meeting into a "town meet-

ing," with selectmen, etc., debating the pertinent questions of the day. They may be a city government, with mayor, councilmen, aldermen, discussing the enfranchisement of that electric road, etc. A training in good government given to boys of this age may mean much to the community in the future. A doctor may become interested in the boys and teach them many things that they ought to know. They may become proficient in their knowledge of how to care for the injured. One messenger service in Colorado has thoroughly mastered a manual on "First Aid to the Injured," and in a trial for speed and skill succeeded in putting on a triangular bandage in twenty-three seconds, which is an enviable record. The studies which particularly interest boys,—electricity, engineering, biology, etc.,—may be profitably taken up in the Messenger meetings. Every boy likes to travel, and tales of adventure hold them spellbound. Secure a copy of Stoddard's lectures and go "round the world" with them. When the time is ripe, that is, when you and the boys are thoroughly well acquainted with each other, and there is that spirit of good fellowship and perfect understanding so essential in dealing with a company of boys, some course of Bible study may be taken up, some normal course, missionary studies, church history, etc. This does not take the place

of the devotional service, but may be added to it when the right time comes.

Warning—Some Messenger Services have failed because of unwise leadership. Some good woman with a love for service and no knowledge of boys has been given the charge of the Messenger Service because she was “willing to do what she could.” She called the boys “Willie,” and “Charlie,” and “Dearie,” and no boy likes that sort of thing. She really loved them, but, they thought that she was “soft.” She was not, but she did not know boy life at all. Do not start a Messenger Service until you have a leader who knows boys first, last, and always. Don’t ask a woman to take charge of the Messengers if you have a good man in your church. If you haven’t an available man, try that young fellow in the high school, or college, who is the idol of half the boys of the community. Do not have anything feminine about the Messenger Service. Don’t put undue emphasis on “feeling” in your evangelistic work with the boys, but make them feel that it is “action” that counts. One boy said: “The reason I like Paul so much is because what he did was so much greater than anything he said.” Don’t be too lenient with the boys; don’t be too ready to condone faults; be strictly “fair” and you will never fail to win the love and respect of your Messengers.

Many Messenger Services have for their motto, "We serve the Mightiest," and they get their inspiration from the legend of St. Christopher. In all the work for and with the boys this is the thought that should be indelibly impressed upon their hearts and minds; that their work is for The Mightiest, and that they best serve Him when they are serving some needy one here "in his name and for his sake."

CHAPTER XI

THE SUNSHINE BAND

The Sunshine Band was formed that an interest in, and knowledge of, church work might be given our young girls. It is an organization of girls between nine and fifteen years of age for the purpose of building them up in church work and of carrying sunshine into dark places; it is designed to furnish a training-course along all lines of church activity common to the women of our churches. Any girl of the stated age is allowed to join the Band who is a member of the Sunday-school and who will promise unquestioning obedience to the leader.

The leader of the Sunshine Band is appointed by the official board of the school and she may be allowed to add such additional helpers as she may need. A young matron who loves and understands girls makes the best leader. One who has not forgotten how she felt and what she liked best "when she was a girl;" one who can enter into the school, home, and social life of the girls understandingly; a woman who can win and never betray confidences; and, above all, a woman of sterling, spiritual character, who shall

not be satisfied until every one of her girls is confessedly "shining for Jesus," which is the motto of the Sunshine Band. One of the girls is elected secretary and treasurer, and committees are appointed by the leader.

The *Visiting Committee* will call on the sick and carry to them delicacies and flowers. They call on the shut-ins, in the hospitals and homes for the aged. They visit in any home, in any place where they can bring a little sunshine.

The *Supply Committee* looks after the soliciting and gathering of supplies necessary for their work—fruit, flowers, jellies, food, groceries, clothing, bed linen, household necessities, and literature.

The *Work Committee* plans the work, cuts out and superintends the making of garments, the making of comfort bags, bandages, and scrap books.

The *Supper Committee* plans for the suppers at the close of the meetings and does the work of the same; they also plan for special suppers which may be given by the Band.

The *Outlook Committee* is always on the outlook for opportunities for service. They find this blind man and notify a member of the visiting committee, who arranges to go at a certain time every week and read to him. Here is a poor woman struggling to support herself and her

four children. She can never go to church, nor the children either, with any degree of regularity. The Supply Committee is notified of the case, and they find here an opportunity to give away some of the garments that they have on hand, and they can lend a helping hand on Saturday afternoon and help get the children ready for church the next day. They arrange that someone shall stay and care for the baby so that the mother can go to church with the children. A member of the outlook committee escorts the children safely home after the Sunday-school session, so that no anxiety need be felt for them by the mother.

This committee may know a girl who used to go to Sunday-school regularly, but she has gotten into indifferent company and has begun to drift. She does not seem to care much about church or Sunday-school now, and the girls are not the same to her, in her estimation, as they used to be. They seek her out, get her to come to one of their cheery meetings, tell the leader about her, and the girl is won as a member, and helped to be true to her best self.

Meetings—The meetings are held every week. Experience teaches that the afternoon of the evening of the mid-week prayer-meeting is the best time for the meeting, and the best place, the church parlor. The meetings usually begin

at four o'clock, as that allows time for the members to reach the church after school closes. A devotional service is conducted by the leader, and may be formal or informal, as may be best. The reports of the various committees are given and plans for the week's work outlined. The work committee distributes the work to be done, and while fingers are busy with the needle and thread, shears, or paste, the president of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society may read interesting bits from the missionary magazine. Then the foreign missionary interests of the church are discussed and thus our girls get their training in foreign missionary work. The same is true of the Home Mission work. Then at one of the meetings the president of the Dorcas or sewing or charitable society may come in and tell of the need of the church along this line, and tell just what the ladies are doing. There is an outfit needed for a new baby. The work committee guarantees to have it ready in due season, and the supply committee plans for the ways and means to get the materials. Another time the Home Department superintendent may come in and tell of some shut-ins and the visiting committee takes note and a round of calls is arranged that shall include every "Sunshiner."

The pastor may come in and perhaps express the wish to see more children in the Sunday

morning service. The outlook committee and the visiting committees agree to see what they can do to meet his wish. And so it may continue indefinitely, until the girls are familiar with every branch of church work and they know how to do it in an acceptable way. Supper is served by the supper committee at six o'clock; each girl brings her own supper, but it is all put on the table and is common to all. This is the free time when the leader should be alone with her girls. There is good cheer and happy talk; school events form a frequent topic of conversation, and the sympathy and counsel of the leader is sought. Some home difficulties or misunderstandings come up, and experiences are interchanged. All try to help each other. At the close of the meal the leader prays; all the joys and trials are remembered and the girls feel that this is the precious climax of the day. One leader often finds little slips of paper containing special requests for prayer tucked under her plate.

While the supper committee does the after-supper work the leader is ready for "confidences," and the girls come to her in her remote corner, singly or in groups, and very weighty confidential matters are discussed. This is the time when the leader comes closest to her girls, and learns from them and their talk with her the bent of their lives at this time. Many a mother

has been made cognizant of undreamed forces in her daughter, by the leader, who, without betraying, often helps mothers to understand their girls a little better.

This properly closes the meeting of the Sunshine Band, but their work at one place has made very easy the carrying out of a plan that has indeed brought much sunshine into the pastor's heart and into the church life at a very vital point, the mid-week prayer service. The plan is given with the hope that many such sunbeams may enter many churches to brighten and bless the work.

At quarter after seven the Sunshine Band, with other boys and girls, numbering about forty in all, meet in the chapel to rehearse the standard church hymns and to learn some new hymn. Honest work is put in until 7.40. Then a three minutes' talk is given to them by the leader and the chorus quietly withdraws to the hall, forms in line, two by two, and at just the hour of the evening service, 7.45, marches in around the chapel singing some grand processional hymn. They remain during the praise service, singing one special piece by themselves. At 8.05 such as must go home are dismissed during the singing of a hymn, while those who can, remain to the service. Many parents object to their children being out late at night, hence withdrawal is

never interpreted to mean a lack of interest or desire on the part of the chorus to remain. The results have been very gratifying. The singing has been improved; a larger and more punctual attendance on the service, and a deeper interest kindled in it, on the part of the church members. Once tried and no church would willingly be without this junior choir. They may aid in the sessions of the Sunday-school and at concerts, but their special work is the steady, every week, mid-week prayer service, the family gathering of the church.

SOME SUNSHINE HAPPENINGS

“Mrs. B. says that she cannot come to church because she gets so tired on Saturday. She has all her mending to do and her children to tub, and such lots of cooking. You know that she goes out to work a lot, too.” The girls thought a while, and then Bess said, “I like to darn stockings; I could do those for her.” Gertie could mend splendidly and she volunteered to mend the rest of the clothing. Ruth took the prize in the cooking class at school and she would love to go and help her with the cooking, and Edith, the future kindergartner, wanted to “tub” the children if Mrs. B. was willing. When the offers of service were first made to Mrs. B. she hardly knew what to make of it, but she was

willing to accept their proffered aid. Two months afterwards Bess was heard to say, "Yes, Mrs. B. and all the children come to church every Sunday, and last night Papa got hold of Mr. B., who is lots more of a man than he used to be, and got him to promise to come along with his family to church, and to come into our new men's class. Mr. B. says that home is a lots nicer place than it used to be."

"I wish that we could make Easter bring its true meaning to lots of people." "Well, let us try to," said the leader. So, for two weeks before Easter the Sunshine Band was busy trimming grape baskets with their colors in crepe paper. Such dainty yellow and white baskets were never before seen. On Easter Sunday morning they filled them with the mountain laurel and may-flowers, placing in each basket a dainty Easter card painted by one of the "Sunshiners," and at seven-thirty marched from the home of their leader to the Old Ladies' Home. There was a basket of beauty for each one of the old ladies and a book, Dr. Knight's "Love Watch," for the matron. The old ladies came right from the breakfast table into the parlor and listened to the Easter carols sung by the girls, and after a little speech from the leader telling them of the work of the girls and their joy in being the first to wish them a happy

Easter, the baskets were given, the good-byes were said, and the girls went to their homes for breakfast. At the close of the morning service, four of the girls were baptized. In the evening the Sunshine Band and junior chorus furnished the major part of a fine Easter concert.

It was a rainy, disagreeable day, and all the inmates in the convalescent ward were homesick and inclined to be downright cross. Never had the hospital seemed so unattractive. The door opened and in came eight girls. They had a bouquet for each one of the patients, a doll that would shut its eyes for the little lame girl, a top that could spin amazingly for the boy who was to go back to the Children's Home next week, and songs and stories for all. They made so much sunshine in their thirty minutes' visit that the rain and clouds outside were powerless to affect the patients of the convalescent ward.

Ruth W. was the most disagreeable girl in the school. She would not belong to the Sunshine Band, or to anything, or do anything that the girls wished her to. She was the only child of a rich widow, and because she had nicer dresses than any one else, she thought that she was better than any one else. Her mother was called away to care for a sick sister in the west and left Ruth with the housekeeper to care for her. Ruth had the measles and they so affected

her eyes that the doctor would not hear of her using them for at least two months. Poor Ruth ! She was a good student, but to lose two months at that time meant that she would not stand any chance for promotion. The girls talked it over. To have to stay in a dark room, or else to have one's eyes bandaged was indeed a trial. Not to read, or study, or look at pictures ! It was a great affliction. The leader just suggested at their Sunshine meeting that now perhaps might be a good time to help Ruth a little ; surely she was sadly in need of sunshine. But the leader would make no suggestions ; she let the girls think it out for themselves.

The result of their planning was a confidential talk with the teacher. Each day the girls would take turn in teaching the lessons that they had had the previous day. It was hard work at first, but Ruth was naturally quick and soon was able to concentrate her mind on what was being read or explained to her. She could learn everything excepting the arithmetic, and that the teacher thought might be allowed to go with just the committing of the principles. At the close of the two months the teacher gave a test of the work to the girls of the Sunshine Band and to Ruth, and was gratified to find that Ruth could keep her place with the class, though denied the use of her eyes for eight long weeks.

When the mother returned from her long trip, worn with watching by her sick sister, she found a new daughter. All the selfish, proud, and disagreeable ways had departed, leaving a sweet, humble, loving spirit, a daughter always on the lookout for a chance to do a favor to some one else. When the mother met the leader of the Sunshine Band and had a talk with her the leader said: "Do not thank me, I did nothing; it was all the girls. Clouds have to disappear when the sun shines so brightly. We find that the brighter we shine, the happier we are." "Yes," said the mother, "and the warmth of your rays kindles an answering spark in many a place that you do not know, and many a life current is changed. I am so glad for what Sunshine has done for me and mine."

CHAPTER XII

RECEPTIONS, SOCIALS, SPECIAL DAYS

Much emphasis can be placed on the social side of the work. It is important and contributes largely to success. One Home Department reception each year is felt to be a necessity. At this time the members have the opportunity of meeting each other and "having a real good talk." Much careful planning is necessary, as there are so many details to be looked after.

First, the most convenient time and place for all. This is generally found to be either in May or October, and the church is usually deemed the best place, using the social rooms mainly. If the auditorium is not required at all it should be free of access, as many a member may desire to go in and "see how the church looks." This sometimes proves to be fraught with material results, as in one case, when one of the members went in to see how the church looked and was so impressed with the dinginess of the carpet that she bought a new one and presented it to the church. Second, the arrangements for transportation. So many are unable to walk that care should be taken to provide not only carriages, but

strong-armed helpers as well. Third, careful arrangement of rooms used. Because of so many invalids extra care must be taken to so arrange chairs that all draughts may be avoided. To help this a generous number of screens should be borrowed for the occasion; also extra wraps. One superintendent, whose annual receptions are great successes, has among other items on her "borrow list" for these occasions twelve screens, twelve hot water bottles, twenty-four shawls or capes, twelve hassocks, twelve rocking-chairs. These may seem to be superfluous, but those who have tried to add to the success of their receptions in this way think it worth ten times the work it makes.

Fourth, the program. This should be of a simple character. No French or Italian songs, no matter how well sung, should find their place on the program. Old songs, and some of the grand new ones in plain English, are always acceptable; so are readings. A few words from the pastor and superintendent of the school are always expected and thoroughly appreciated by the members. If some one from a distance who is engaged in the work gives them a view of the work being done in other places it serves to stimulate endeavor on the part of both visitors and members. The following is a suggestive program:

Musical selection.

Welcome and devotional by the pastor.

Solo.

Our Record for the Year, by the Home Department
Superintendent.

Hymn.

Reading.

Solo.

About Our Main School.—By the Superintendent.

Hymn.

Address.—Home Department Expert.

Solo.

Social Hour.

Every speaker should be brief; the address should not exceed twenty minutes in length. The Home Department superintendent's record should be in the nature of a report.

The refreshments served should be of the simplest character; sandwiches, 'cake, wafers, cream, and plenty of tea and coffee are most acceptable. An elaborate menu is undesirable. If possible, serve the refreshments in some room where you can have small tables and chairs; it is not easy to stand and hold cup, saucer and plate. It is wise to have the tea table in commission throughout the entire time. Be sure and allow time for general conversation. This often is the only time when a large number see each other and a "real good visit" is so much appreciated. If you have a number of Cradle Roll mothers, it is a good plan to have a com-

mittee take charge of the tiny ones in some remote room fitted up as a temporary nursery, or, if you have a Sunshine Band, and it be deemed wiser, let the girls go to the homes and care for the children. If the finances permit, it is pleasing to have a printed program which the members can keep as a souvenir. Many such programs contain pictures of the church, or pastor, or superintendent. Some have four pages and contain the superintendent's report. It is well to invite the church and adult members of the school to these receptions.

The socials are more conservative and are mainly for the members, just to give them an informal good time. Many departments find it pleasant to hold "neighborhood socials," meeting in the homes of some of the members. In the summer time the near-by pleasure-resorts afford a fine opportunity for picnic socials. No formal program is necessary for a social.

"Anniversaries" make a delightful social occasion, and many departments have their anniversary night in place of the annual reception. Here the members have an hour or so of sociability, followed by a banquet; all the speechmaking is at the table.

There are a number of "special days" in our Sunday-school work, and on all of these occasions the Home Department should be remem-

bered. Invitations should be sent; places reserved for them; committees appointed to welcome and care for them. When the nature of the occasion permits, the Home Department should be represented on the program. Happy is that department whose church gives them one Sunday each year. All necessary transportation is provided, a special sermon preached for them, and old and familiar hymns are sung. In a locality where the church service is followed directly by the Sunday-school, the session may be entirely for the Home Department members. A brief review and study of the lessons may be given, and then each department have some exercise that illustrates the work they are doing as a grade.

The beginners may sing one of their motion songs. The primary department and the junior department can repeat some of their supplemental work. The intermediate department may have one of their number exhibit some of their map work. The senior and adult department may have some responsive service. At the close of the school, opportunity should be given for the members of the school to meet and greet the members of the Home Department.

CHAPTER XIII

ITS PLACE IN ORGANIZED SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK

No organization is productive of more good than the world-wide organized Sunday-school work. North America is practically completely organized by state, province, and territory for the betterment of the work, and once in three years representatives from all over the country meet in the International Convention. Here every department of work is studied and committees chosen to care for each. The Home Department is one of the recognized departments, and every three years a committee is elected to study conditions and care for it. Dr. W. A. Duncan, of Syracuse, New York, the pioneer champion of the work in the Sunday-school world, was elected honorary chairman of this committee for life at the convention in Toronto, Canada, in 1905. There were reported at that time 10,429 departments, with a membership of 393,845. At the executive committee meeting at Winona Lake, Indiana, August, 1906, Dr. Duncan reported 11,891 departments, with 438,102 members.

Each state, province and territory has its own

organization, and in most of these there is a Home Department committee. To do effective work a committee of three or five should be chosen from the state executive committee to care for this Department. Their servant is the state Home Department secretary or superintendent, elected by the full executive committee or by the state convention. Between the committee and the secretary there should be the fullest confidence. No committee, however competent, can know conditions as can the secretary who is on the field and comes into personal contact with the workers; hence it is not so much the province of the committee to dictate as to advise. The secretary reports the conditions as they are, and may give his ideas as to the best way of meeting and bettering them; the committee can then intelligently counsel and advise; then, with the sanction of the committee, the secretary can continue his work. That there may be no conflict or confusion in the field-work, the general secretary is supposed to be a member, *ex-officio*, of every committee. He may know of reasons why certain plans that might work well in some places would come to naught in others. His counsel at these committee meetings is most valuable. The Home Department secretary, however, so far as plans and work are concerned, is answerable primarily to the Home

Department committee. At least four meetings a year should be held, and at each meeting the secretary should furnish each member of the committee with a copy of his report.

Some things that the committee and secretary counsel about are: How to interest every pastor and superintendent in the work; how best to introduce the work in a new field; how to secure the best county or district secretaries; how best to present the work at conventions and in conferences; what printed matter is necessary; what are the methods of canvassing; how to secure the attendance of Home Department workers at conventions; how best to secure financial aid from the individual Home Departments for the state work.

As the state has its organization, so have the counties or districts, according to the division of the State, and in each of these subdivisions there should be a Home Department secretary. This secretary is elected at the annual district convention by the convention, and if satisfactory service is rendered the same person should be re-elected indefinitely. The counsel and service of the state secretary is at the disposal of these district secretaries, and, working together, every school in the district may be reached. Nearly all of the county or district secretaries serve for love of the work, and receive no financial com-

pensation. Usually the district organization provides stationery and stamps. Where this is not done by the district, the necessary materials are furnished from the state office, unless the secretary wishes to make a personal contribution to the work, of this amount. Many of the workers have but little leisure time and certain printed letter-forms furnished them from the

.....19..

Dear.....

Our annual district convention is to be held on
.....at.....in the.....church.
The sessions begin at.....,,
..... Our work is on the.....pro-
gram and our conference is at..... I greatly
desire to meet you and every one of your Visitors.
Will you kindly send each a postal reminder of the
time and place, that they may not forget?

Expecting to see you and your helpers, and pray-
ing for His blessing upon all of our work, I am,

Cordially yours,

.....District Secretary.

state office are greatly appreciated, and produc-
tive of quick returns. For example, the secre-
tary wishes the presence of all home depart-
ment workers at the annual district convention;
here, in addition to an address that shall be

helpful to them is an opportunity for conference and personal questions about the work. The workers may have been absent from the school when the notice of the convention has been given, but if the following letter is furnished in quantities to the secretary he can fill in the blanks in a short time and trust Uncle Sam to see to it that the notice reaches every Home Department superintendent.

One of the most important duties of the secretary is the furnishing of complete statistics to the state secretary each year. That uniformity may be conserved, statistical blanks are furnished so that each Home Department superintendent may fill out the blank for his own department. As the work varies somewhat in different states, each state secretary may formulate his own questions ; but that the international chairman may have the information he needs, the following questions should always appear :

Name and address of superintendent.

Number of members.

Number of men.

Number of Visitors.

Number joining the main school from the Department.

Number joining the Department from the main school.

Number joining the church from the Department.

Amount of envelope collections for the year.

The following questions are pertinent, and often appear on the statistical sheet:

Date of organization.

Name and address of pastor.

Name and address of superintendent.

Number of members in institutions.

Number of Messengers who serve the Department.

Number in the Sunshine Band.

Do you hold quarterly reviews?

Do you hold neighborhood meetings?

Do you have an annual reception?

How many family classes have you?

Loss in membership during the year?

Gain in membership during the year?

CHAPTER XIV

COUNCIL AND CHAPTER PLANS

One of the most successful ways of systematizing the Home Department work of the state is the establishing of a Home Department council with as many chapters as there are subdivisions in the state. The council membership is composed of the state Home Department secretary, the state Home Department committee, the district Home Department secretaries and, as *ex officio* members, the chairman of the state executive committee, the general secretary, and the president of the state association. The state Home Department secretary is the recognized leader of the council. A vice-leader, secretary and treasurer may be elected by the council at its annual meeting.

The purpose of the council is to provide a suitable time and place for a meeting that shall furnish to each one such a panoramic view of the work of the state, province or territory as shall be mutually helpful. The meeting usually takes place during the annual state convention. Each district secretary gives a brief report of the work being done, essential statistics, and

helpful incidents that serve to illustrate some special phases of the work. After all have reported, opportunity is given for comment and question. Thus every district is informed of the work being done by other districts, and the interchange of ideas proves very helpful. Certain definite things may be suggested to the council for the year's work by the state Home Department committee: Work during the first quarter, to secure men as members for the Home Department; during the second quarter, a canvass of institutions for members; during the third quarter, the establishment of family classes; during the fourth quarter, special evangelistic work with the members, with the gaining of all for church membership as the aim. All the reports should be in writing, and given to the secretary of the council.

A semi-annual meeting may be held if advisable. The summer school often furnishes a good place for such a meeting, especially if the Home Department has its rightful place on the summer school curriculum. The meeting of the council each year furnishes the opportunity for personal contact, and during the year a system of correspondence proves helpful to keep the workers in touch with each other.

The counties or districts may be grouped, and a round robin or chain letter may be started for

each group. For instance, Massachusetts is divided into fifty districts; these districts are arranged in five groups of ten districts each. A list of the names and addresses in the correct order was furnished each secretary and the plan fully explained to them. A strong, large, manila envelope was provided, on which were written the names and addresses. In one corner directions were given to mail to the first uncrossed address.

Secretary No. 1 of the group wrote her letter, which reported the progress in her district, new plans of work, etc., she drew a line through her name and address, put on a stamp and sent it to the next on the list. The envelope is never sealed, but secured by a stout string. Secretary No. 2 on the list read the letter, wrote and added her letter, and sent it to the next on the list. When the ten letters were in they went to the state secretary, who read them, carefully noting, for future use, the information contained, enclosed all in a new envelope and sent it to No. 1, who thus had the opportunity to read all. She may take out the one she put in first and write a new one, enclose it, and send it on as before. By this means, new ways of work are discovered, and each secretary has a broader outlook than she finds in just her own district.

The Chapter

The membership of the chapter of the state council comprises every Home Department superintendent and Visitor in the district. The district Home Department secretary is the leader of the chapter with a vice-leader and secretary elected by the chapter. At least four meetings are held each year, usually on the most convenient evening of the second week of the quarter. Monthly meetings are advisable for districts having many new Departments. The aim of the chapter is to aid in establishing a Home Department in every school in the district, and continually to improve those already in existence. At each meeting there is the roll-call of the superintendents, each of whom gives a report of his work, afterwards filing it with the secretary. Important statistics are never omitted. After all the reports have been given, the leader can comment on the same and then give the superintendents and Visitors opportunity for questions. It is an incentive to better work to have some expert from outside come in and address the chapter.

As in the council, suggestions for future work that shall be uniform are given. When the members become familiar with the chapter work, a two-session meeting is advisable, an afternoon session, to be executive in its character, when

reports can be given, etc., and an evening session, which shall be of an inspirational character, and to which all the schools in the district are invited. At the evening session, a résumé of the reports of the afternoon can be given. If possible, a light supper can be served, so that the members may not need to go home between the sessions.

Some Chapter Incidents

The state secretary was invited to the first meeting of the chapter. "I shall need your support and encouragement, for I fear our numbers will be very small. As we have only nine Departments in the district out of the twenty-three schools, there cannot be very many workers. We have invited any who are interested in the work to attend, so we may get a few more from those." The district secretary was hopeful, but not the least bit optimistic. She had secured a small chapel for the meeting, that the audience might not seem lost. The state secretary was late, owing to an open drawbridge, but her surprise and pleasure was great when, instead of sliding quietly into a rear seat she had to take the very front one, for all the rest were filled. The nine reports were fine, each breathing a desire for a larger knowledge of methods and of the work in general.

At the close of the address by the state secretary, the questions from all in the house came thick and fast. At the close of the meeting, which was an hour and three-quarters long, instead of the hour that had been planned, a pastor said: "I came here to-night to learn if the Department was really feasible and desirable for our church to take hold of. I am convinced that it is, and at your next meeting you will have another superintendent to report."

A Home Department superintendent said: "I came here with a determination to resign my office; the work has gone just about so for the last three years, and somehow we could not see how to put new life into it; but now I know, and am full of courage. I asked my Visitors to come here with me, and all came, and we now feel that we understand the meaning of the work and feel that it is more than worth the while, and we shall put our best endeavors into it hereafter. The best of all is that we can depend on just these same helpful meetings every quarter."

A Visitor said, "I shall never again feel that our work doesn't count. I have learned much from the experience of others, and shall look forward to our next meeting with pleasure."

After two years, during which the chapter met quarterly, there were in this district twenty-

one Departments, and each one doing the most excellent work.

"How came such a busy man as you here to-night?" was asked of a pastor who had always had, as an excuse, when his friend, the state Home Department secretary, tried to talk her work to him, "Too much on hand now." "I had to come in self-defense. Of course, you know that we have not had the time to start the work, and evidently the good people who constitute the chapter thought that we were not alive to our duties. Within three days, seven different people from four denominations came and asked me to attend this meeting with some of my people, and give the work a fair hearing. So I came with twenty-one of my folks as a body-guard, and we have all been taken captive and are going to work out our salvation in organizing as fine a Department as there is in the district, for we have much available material for members and workers. We are going at it at once." He did, and in six months had a membership of one hundred and seventy-five.

"How did you come to add so many new Departments in your district last year?" was asked one of the chapter leaders. "By getting those in authority where there were no Departments to attend our chapter meetings. We called on pastor and superintendent and some of the

teachers of those churches, and told them of the work that was being done; invited them to the meetings. They came, were interested, and, feeling sure of help from us, at any and all times, were encouraged to start a Department. We all help each other and enjoy it, because it broadens our work. You frequently see our Methodist superintendent at a meeting of the Congregational Home Department workers, and *vice versa*. We are just one big family in our Home Department work, and all equally interested in each other."

CHAPTER XV

INCIDENTS

My First Social.—"Our first venture is to be held in the home of one of our members, a "shut-in," who, by opening her home, is enabled to have a part in our good time. You must be sure to come as early as you can, for this is new ground to us, and we are not sure of ourselves; we are so desirous of having the social a success in every way, so that the church and school shall take a real live interest in our work. We have done all that you suggested, and now—for the results!"

The state secretary closed her desk on such an accumulation of matter, and boarded the train for the place from which the letter was written. An obstruction on the track caused a delay of half an hour, so that when the train reached M—it was late. There was just one lone hack at the station, and as the secretary looked about her, the driver came limping up and said, "Are you Mother S——?" Too amazed to say anything, she nodded an affirmative. "Well, to-day I am one of your children. This is a Home Department hack, and these are

Home Department horses, and I am to drive you quick to our Home Department social." This was rattled off in one breath, and just as rapidly, the secretary found herself shut in the vehicle and away she was whirled. Never in her experience had she been driven at such a rate, and she devoutly prays that she may never be again. When the home was reached, the driver did have the grace to look ashamed as he saw her evident perturbation. "Guess we came pretty fast, but you see the nags and I have been all the afternoon, since one o'clock, just crawling along carrying old and sick people to Mrs. ——. We just had to let off steam, and you looked as if you could stand it. Besides, we were late, anyhow."

The house seemed filled to overflowing, and as the superintendent escorted the secretary upstairs, she said, "Everything is going finely. We have nearly all the officials of the church and school here, and we have over eighty of the Department. Old Mr. S. is here. He has both legs cut off, you know, and we have some here who have not been out of their homes for years; they are having such a good time. Our pastor is getting his eyes open, and some of the rest of the folks who have been so indifferent."

The program was fine; the pastor's wife was a sweet singer, and she delighted the company

a number of times with her songs, a fine elocutionist gave several short readings, and the state secretary spoke of the work. The Sunshine Band and Messenger boys contributed their share to the entertainment, and everything did indeed go off well.

When the refreshments were served, the secretary found herself shut in a corner by some one closing a door part way, thus she was unobserved and hemmed in. While in this predicament she overheard the following conversation between the pastor and his senior deacon. "Why, have you seen who are here? I never knew that as a church we had any claim on Mrs. A., and now she tells me that she has belonged to the Department a year, and has enjoyed it so much. Just think! Four of our young men have given up a half-day's pay just to enable some of these folks to get here, those who have had to be lifted in and out of the carriage. When I thanked Jack just now, he said, 'Don't mention it! We are more than paid in witnessing the delight of these poor folks in meeting their old friends and having a genuine good time.' Deacon, I never before realized all that this work meant, and I fear that we have not been treating Mrs. R. fairly; we have not given her the definite help that we might have; but from me, in the future, she can ask anything

for this work and I shall be proud to serve her. Truly this is a blessed work, and is accomplishing for those who need it most, just what we have been hoping that as a church we might undertake—creating and maintaining a united family interest in God's Word and the church." That evening, as the secretary had her second ride in the Home Department hack, the man said to her, "Well, some folks do live Christianity, others are rare talkers, but slim does of it, but this afternoon has been an eye-opener to me." The social proved an eye-opener to many, and for years the Home Department has been one of the most honored of all in that church and school.

The Valiant Woman.—"I am so glad to have you go with me on the canvass this afternoon; I have saved the hardest cases for you to undertake. We shall go first to call on 'the valiant woman.'" The secretary, amused, looked at the Visitor and said, "What ever gave such a title to one of our weaker sex?" "Her unquestioned ability to keep her home free from all intruders. None of the neighbors have succeeded in calling on her, and when the minister called and would not leave the doorstep, for he knew that she was at home, she stuck her head out of the window and told him that there was no one at home, no one who wanted

to see him, and that he needn't keep on ringing the bell, for she was not at home. Of course, there was nothing else consistent with his clerical dignity but to beat an undignified retreat. The sad part is, that she has three bright children, and while they attend the public schools, they are not allowed to attend the Sunday-school. They are very bright children, and evidently well brought up, for they are extremely reticent about home affairs. It is for their sakes that I am so very anxious to get some hold on the woman. Wish that we knew some vulnerable point in her."

The front door was forbiddingly closed, but the side piazza door was open, and here the secretary guided her friend. Just the lightest knock and then, as no one appeared, but the sound of singing from a room in the rear could be heard, the two entered, and rapped more loudly. The woman came in and looked aghast at the sight of the intruders, but before she could collect her thoughts to say anything, the secretary said: "My! What magnificent plants! How do you coax them to bloom so? Do you use some kind of plant food? Do tell me your secret?"

For a moment the woman hesitated, and then gave the desired information, and as she was about to ask the intent of this forced call, the

secretary was ill-mannered enough to begin on horticulture again, this time asking so many questions that the woman was interested, for the vulnerable point had been found. It was just this, love of flowers.

For fully fifteen minutes, the conversation was on this subject, and then the secretary asked all kinds of pardon, and introduced herself and her companion. By degrees the real intent of the call was made known, and the plea made for an opportunity to know her better, and for the privilege of presenting her children to the Sunday-school for membership. After a very apparent struggle with herself, the woman said, "Well, I have dear children, and they ought not to be kept from anything that will help them, and if the rest of the church people are like you, I will not keep them away any longer, but as for me, I must decline. I really prefer to live a retired life." After a long talk about the children the secretary begged for at least a Home Department membership for the mother. Then the life story was told; it was so sad, and, because those who should have stood by the mother in her trouble turned away, and the church of which she was a member gave her no helping hand, only cold looks, and a decided "letting alone," she concluded to move away and live just for her children, and have nothing

to do with any one other than the school-teacher, and possibly the doctor of the place.

When the two left the home they carried with them the promise of the children's presence at the service of church and school the next Sunday and the Home Department membership of the mother, and, best of all, a request to the pastor that he would call and receive an apology for her rudeness, and allow her to make amends. Two years later, when the convention met at that church, the chairman of the refreshment committee was this woman. Valiant indeed, for she had risen above trouble that might well have crushed any woman, and now was living for her children in the best sense of the word, for once more she had allowed Him to come in and help, and had found in the church true "brothers and sisters in Christ."

Major.—"You have asked every one on your list except the Major. Why don't you ask him?"

The daughter looked rather shamefacedly at her mother and then owned up, "I'm scared; he is such a cold, polished man, so absolutely correct every way, and just about as unapproachable as the North Pole. I know he won't join the Home Department." "Do your part and ask him to-day." It was with a feeling of joy that the daughter saw the Major get into his

carriage and drive home after the church service; she truly had not the opportunity to reach him to proffer her request.

As she was about going into the chapel one of the messengers came to her and said delightedly, "See what I have for you!" He held out an application card for membership in the Home Department, signed by the Major. Hardly believing her eyes, she said, "Why, Francis, where did you get that?" "Why, don't you remember that we boys asked you for ten cards each, thinking that we might help to get some members? Last Sunday the other boys told me that they had their cards full, and that they would only wait one more week for me; I had nine and was wondering where I could get the last one. I have to go to old Mrs. S., you know, she lives just beyond the Major, and last Sunday I was thinking about that card just as I got to the Major's, and then I saw him sitting out in the yard, reading the Sunday newspaper. I thought that I might perhaps get him if no one else had asked him, and, besides, I had a prime reason for his joining, too."

"What did you say, and what did he say? Tell me all about it! I am so glad you got him!"

"Well, I went up to him and said, 'Hullo, Major, I want you to join the Sunday-school.'

He looked at me over his glasses in that calm, exasperating sort of way he has, and said, 'Join the Sunday-school; pray, why do you think I should join the school, my lad?' Then I had him. I said, 'Because of Fay, sir.' He looked at me and asked what about Fay, and I told him. I told him that Fay never had his lesson, and that he did not behave in the class, and that when the teacher asked him why he acted as he did, and why he never had his lesson he said, "My father does not have to come to Sunday-school nor get any lesson, and I don't see what I have to come for.' The Major looked a minute at me kinder queer, and then he said slowly, 'I guess you're right. I cannot come to Sunday-school, however.'" Then I had him, for I told him about the Home Department, and fished out my card and asked him if he would join. He said he would, and I told him to write his name right off before he changed his mind. He kinder laughed and wrote it, and there it is. When I came back he was reading his paper, and I just ran home hard as I could and got mother to give me her quarterly, and went back and said, 'Major, every Sunday teacher asks us about last Sunday's lesson; here it is, and Fay didn't know a word of his lesson to-day, so I thought perhaps you'd better post up and help him.' The Major took the book and laughed

again, and told me to call every Sunday. Say, he is fine when you get close to him."

The superintendent looked at the boy in loving awe. In his direct, boyish fashion he had conquered while she had been procrastinating. When the report from the members came in at the close of the quarter the Major's study record was perfect. The man was not a professing Christian, but thoroughly good. When the year came to a close, the last report was not complete. The Major was not, for "God took him." He died a sweet, humble Christian. A short time before his death he said to his wife, "I thank God for the little lad that came and told me that I ought to study my Bible. Instead of letting others do the studying for me, the personal study of it has led me to see as I never thought to see, and now I am just going home to the 'many mansions.'"

Lost.—"Be sure that you do not fail me; service commences at 10.30, and if I keep on I shall not have voice enough left to conduct the preliminary service, as you seem to think I must do. This is just the chance to get in your Home Department work."

The pastor left the state office feeling relieved that all arrangements for the Sunday's services had been completed, and went home to nurse a very hard cold.

Sunday morning the secretary found herself, according to directions, in B. Square; the place was strange to her, and as car after car came along she got a wee mite confused. "Is this the car for C.?" she asked of the starter. Being assured that it was, she entered, but, wishing to be sure that she made no mistake, she asked the conductor of the car, "Is this the car for C. that goes by the Methodist church?" He said that it was, and she was satisfied. Just as the last bell was tolling, the car stopped between two churches, and the conductor motioned to her to get out. She did so, and looked, one was a Catholic church, surely, and the other did not seem to correspond with the description of the church to which she was going. She asked a passer-by and received the startling information that she was at least two miles from her destination, that this was a part of C., but that particular part was exactly opposite, and at least two long miles away. The terminal was but a block away, and as the car came back she got on. There was no one in the car, and the conductor looked at her rather blankly. "Wasn't that the church?"

"Indeed it was not. I should think that you conductors ought to read up on the churches." This was not said in the pleasantest of tones, and the conductor rather resented it. "Well, that

may be, but I should think that the churches had better get read up on us. We have to work, no chance to go and hear them read or anything else."

It came home with force to the secretary: Was not this her work? Was not the reaching of the masses her particular theme that she was going to speak on that Sunday morning if she ever reached her destination? She told the conductor all about her work and her mission of the day, and he was interested, but plainly very sceptical about any very definite results coming from her endeavors. "You mean all right, and it is a good thing. It would help a man to feel that he was not outside the pale of respectability, and that the church did feel some care for him. But, bless you! you don't know this city; why, it takes the good church people all their time to take care of their own precious souls, and they have no time to care for any one else's." The church, the right one this time, was reached just as the poor pastor, in a hoarse voice, was giving out the hymn that precedes the sermon. The look of relief that passed over his face as he saw the delinquent, was eloquent. Hurried explanations were given him, and the secretary delivered her message, not the one she had prepared with so much care, but a history of the morning's experiences, the great need, the im-

mense field for home mission work at our very doors, and suggested the Home Department as the most effective agency for reaching out and meeting the need.

At the session of the Sunday-school the men's class asked her to sit with them in planning the best way to reach these men. At the close of the evening service the Home Department had been established and workers pledged to canvass not only the homes, but to go to the car-barns, fire stations, roundhouse, police station and jail. A few weeks later the secretary found herself bound for B., and as the conductor came to take her fare she recognized her former unbelieving friend. "Guess I was rather hard on the folks round here a few weeks ago, wasn't I? I'll take it all back; they are better than I thought. One of the men got after me and landed me the first time, and it's all right. If they keep it up, lots of the fellows will be better than they are now."

Stove Blacking vs. Religion.—The Home Department Visitors were having an experience party, and the one that most amused the secretary was from one of the daintiest of little women.

"Yes, I got old Mrs. B. at last, but such a course as she put me through! She has been sick for over two months, and her poor old


husband has been doing the work, all but blacking the stove. He drew the line there, and said that he'd wash it, but as for 'sticking on blacking,' he would not. When I asked her if she would join the Home Department she informed me that she never had time to be a Christian when she was well, and she guessed she would not start in while she was flat on her back. I told her that joining the Home Department did not necessarily mean that one must be a Christian, although we greatly desired that all our members might come to know Him. Her husband is a member, a church member also, and I suppose that is what put the idea into her head. She wanted to know if I had religion enough to black her stove; that she was 'fair sick' to see a good shine on her range once more. 'John had some religion, but not enough to black stoves;' then she said that she would make a bargain—if I would come and black her stove real good, three times a week, while she was sick, she would join the Home Department and get her lessons 'by heart,' and see to it that John did the same. Poor John, he knows his Bible from cover to cover, almost, but she will never allow that John knows any more than she does. So I have been for the past three weeks a stove blacker, and I want you to believe that I am getting to be quite an expert." The

ladies fairly shouted, and one said: "Why, Mrs. G., I do not believe you ever blacked a stove before in all your life, did you?"

Mrs. G. laughed and owned up that she never had; she had always had servants to do that kind of work, both in her father's and her own home. "But you see, I was bound to get my old lady, she is such a character, and the grace of God would do so much for her, and if it meant stove blacking, why I just had to black stoves. So I went into my kitchen and made Mary show me how to go to work, and I blacked my own stove for practise, and then went 'and did my lesson' for Mrs. B. I am not sorry that she is now able to do it herself, but I shall call often, even if I am not to take care of her range any more. She has gotten interested in the lesson study, and her remarks on the lessons are so bright and original. I am sure that she will yet be a child of the Kingdom." That night, as the pastor accompanied the secretary home, he said: "When our ladies of wealth and leisure undertake this work in true earnest they have experiences that are worth while. Mrs. G. does not know it, but her Mary was so impressed with the idea that her dainty little mistress cared enough for the soul of old Mrs. B. that she came to me and had a long talk, and as a result will join the church."

The Sailor.—There came into the prayer-meeting in the Methodist Church of C. one night a young lady accompanied by a young man, whose likeness to her proclaimed a close relationship. The pastor looked curiously at the man whom he had never seen before, and then he looked at the girl; yes, he had seen her at the church several times of late, but she had always left so quickly that he had never had the opportunity of speaking to her. Something in their attitude made him change his entire subject matter for the service. Instead of the study of Philemon which he had planned to begin that night, he asked that the meeting might be one of testimony of God's goodness to his people in the past week. The pastor's own talk was most helpful and as the testimonies came thick and fast the strange young man seemed deeply moved.

At the close of the meeting the pastor gave the opportunity for any who desired to accept Christ openly to do so then, and the young man arose. They learned that he was a sailor, and the next day was to leave his sister, who was the only one left of a large family, and go off on a long voyage. He had felt that he needed the help of One that was able to care for him, but he did not know just how to give himself to Him; but it had all been made so plain. "If



only I might stay here and belong to you and get help from you in this new way; but I go where there will be little or no Christian influence, and what if I should not be able to keep Christian?" The pastor comforted the young man, as only a pastor who loves men with a Christ-like love can, and then, giving him his own little Bible and the Sunday-school quarterly explained the Home Department to him. "You can let us know where to address you, and whenever you get to that port you shall find letters from us. Write to me freely, and I will help you all that I can. You can study your lessons and read your Bible and really belong to us through our Home Department, and when you return we shall hope to welcome you to our church membership." He went away happy.

Some time later the pastor received a letter of grateful appreciation from him, containing some crude verses which the young man had composed during the night watches:

Oftentimes I sit and ponder,
As we are sailing forth,
Of the meeting over yonder,
Where I first did meet the Lord.

Once I knew no comfort,
Always discontent,
And harshly saying sadly,
"Why should I repent?"

But seems as though it's changing,
As I read my lesson through,
I can't help a-thinking
Of what else that I can do.

Pray, and read my Bible,
And learn my lesson through,
Then pass it to my shipmate,
And let him read it, too.

Then I'll tell him where I got it,
And what I got it for,
And tell him that there's more room
Through the open door.

And if he wants to enter,
I'll take him by the hand,
And lead him there in glory,
As best I possibly can.

So, brothers and dear sisters,
Is there more that I can do?
If so, I wish you'd tell me,
For I'd like to learn it through.

But here I'll gently tell you
Of something that is grand—
That God is on the ocean
Just the same as on the land.

That Record.—"I am right glad to welcome you home again, and so glad you are willing to take a class in our Home Department. You shall have most of those you had before you went away, and some new ones. I know that you will be glad to have Mrs. Blake." The

Visitor laughed, for in the five years of Home Department life, Mrs. Blake had been one of the incorrigibles. She would not mark her study record nor tell what she did, but she absolutely refused to be dropped or considered in any way a delinquent. She was interested in the church work, and for the sake of her husband the Department overlooked her breaches of discipline. But now there was to be a pruning of the entire school. Records were to be gone over thoroughly and corrected; no one was to be counted twice, and if any had been absent for three months, they were to be looked up, and if needful their names taken from the roll. The Home Department was to come in for its share, and the study record must be kept by each member.

“My dear Mrs. Blake, I am very grateful for your generous offering, but you have forgotten to mark your study record. Have you studied every lesson, or have you missed some? I will mark it for you this time, and will you please remember to do it hereafter? We have to have this in order for our superintendent to make her report to the school. You know the study counts just the same as attendance in point of rule.”

Mrs. Blake's face hardened into set lines, and she said, “Well, I have studied some, but I never have kept account, and never shall, by

making those silly marks on the envelope. Didn't I agree, when I joined, to study every lesson unless prevented by some good cause? Well, that will have to answer." "But I do want to mark you 'present' in a sense, and give you credit for what you do, and you would never want credit for what you did not," pleaded the Visitor. But argue as she would, she could not get Mrs. Blake to see why she need mark that envelope. At last a happy thought came to her. "Your little grandson goes to Sunday-school now; isn't that fine! I suppose that he goes every Sunday." "Yes, he has not missed one excepting the time he had the measles." "Oh, well, I suppose that he was counted present just the same." Mrs. B. looked in amazement at the Visitor. "Of course he wasn't; I guess that he counts when he is there, but, of course, not when he isn't." "You are not very consistent, dear Mrs. Blake. According to your own practise a member is a member, and present every Sunday, no matter how it goes. The secretary of the school has no duties save to look at the membership of the school and give that each Sunday. What is the use of going over the record of attendance of the day? They have all joined the school and will come if they can."

Mrs. Blake looked steadily at the friend for a long time. Then she said slowly: "Give me

that envelope and that pencil; I see it now." After the record had been made she was asked, "Now, won't you tell me just the reason you have been so persistent about this matter? Why have you been so reluctant to keep the record?"

"Well, you see, I did not quite understand, though I thought I did. Somehow the importance of it never made itself felt till you spoke as you did of Freddie's not being counted each Sunday. To tell the truth, I thought it was just your everlasting curiosity as to my ability to keep my agreement, and I was bound not to gratify it; but I see now that I was wrong."

SOME MESSENGER HAPPENINGS.

When the visitors of the Home Department adopted the one-call-a-week plan, some anxiety was felt regarding the envelope. Would the Messenger be able to secure the record of study? The testimony of one of the members settled all forebodings:

"Why, Deacon A—! You've only studied ten lessons, and there are twelve in the quarter. Been away?" No; the Deacon had not been away. "Been sick?" No; not sick. "Well, but say, Deacon," said our earnest Messenger, "I say it's too bad—just guess you got a little lazy; I did want all my class to have a perfect

record. Say, I've got to go to several other places, and if you'll go right in now and hustle, you'll have time to make up those two lessons. I'll call on my way back."

"Well, now," said the Deacon, "I did hustle. The lad was so intensely in earnest about it all. I promise you that he won't catch me that way again."

"I know why we have a blue and white badge." "Why?" "You see the white means purity and the blue means loyalty—and we boys have to be loyal and pure to be Messengers."

One day while standing on the edge of the sidewalk, a boy ran across the street and said, "Hullo, Mother Stebbins!"

I looked down and saw a boy with a bright, mischievous face. "Who are you?" I asked.

"Don't you remember me? I'm Leon S—"

Then I remembered him—and looking closely I saw his badge of service, the button. "What are you up to? I see that you're on duty."

"Nothin' much."

"Oh, but if you are one of my boys—and you must be, because only my boys call me 'mother,'—you should tell me what you are doing for the Master."

"Well, then, if you must know—I'm huntin' kids."

I was displeased, and I think that I showed it.

So many times I had told superintendents to instill into the boys' hearts and minds that their work was pre-eminently a sacred work, work that the Master would do—and that they do it in His stead. So I said sternly: "Leon, you ought not to wear your badge for anything like that."

He looked up quickly and said:

"It's all right, and you will say so, too, when I tell you: You remember Mrs. French and her twin boys? Well, the boys are lost. Mrs. French came into my mother's, crying like everything. She said she'd got three policemen huntin' for 'em, and she wanted me to hunt, too. She kept sayin', 'My little lambs! My little lambs!' Humph! felt as if I shouldn't care if they was never found; for they're such an awful nuisance—so I was goin' to tell her that I couldn't find 'em. The idea of calling those kids 'little lambs!' Before I had a chance to say anything, mother looked at me. When she looks that way it means, 'Think before you speak.' So I thought."

For a moment he stood silent, kicking the curbing with the toe of his shoe; then he looked up with serious eyes and said:

"Do you know our parson's favorite hymn?"

I was puzzled. I could grasp no connection with the subject in hand.

“Well—it’s ‘The Ninety-and-Nine.’”

Bump! went the toe of his shoe again. Something came up in my throat, and I had hard work to choke it down; a mistiness came before my eyes; but there was a song of thanksgiving in my heart as I followed his reasoning. Glancing up, all the seriousness gone, and fun and mischief again gaining the mastery, he said:

“Say, Mother Stebbins, ain’t two little lost lambs equal to a lost sheep?”

He was about to dart away, but I collared him back, and thrust into his hand a postal card, and said: “Leon, you are right; you do right to wear your button. Let me know if you find the children.”

Three days later I received this on a postal from Leon:

“Dear Mother Stebbins:—Kids found, howling like mad. I beat the policemen (for Christ’s sake). Leon.”

The last three words, so finely written that I could barely make them out, explained in words what face, voice, and manner did to me as he defended his right to wear his badge of service.

On the Sleeper.—The section opposite mine was taken by the most interesting family, a mother and three children. Evidently the mother was an invalid and the care that the children tried

to take of her was beautiful to witness. As night drew near, the mother asked the porter if he would make up their berths very early, as they were very tired. As he was about to begin, I invited them to sit with me. There was one girl of about twelve, another about seven, and a small boy of about three years of age, all such pretty, bright children. As the porter's "All right now, lady," sounded in our ears, the little boy said,

"Oh, dear mother, can't we have prayers out here in the light? I hate that dark, stuffy little hole." The little mother colored warmly, and looked questioningly at me. I said, "Surely have them here; I know just how your little one hates the dark berth." Without more words the oldest girl took from her little bag a small Bible, and the mother read a short chapter; then, to my amazement, the children, followed by the mother, knelt between the two seats and the prayers were offered; first the oldest girl, then the next, then the little one's, "Now I lay me," and then the mother, such a fervent prayer for His blessing and his strength and his comfort. Then, still kneeling, they sang all four verses of "My Jesus, I love Thee;" sang it so softly that those in the next section could not have heard them. Then they kissed each other and rose to their feet. The mother put her little ones to bed and then came back to me. "You were very kind to

allow us to have our evening devotions here, and somehow I feel I ought to explain a little to you." I assured her that I was deeply interested and should appreciate anything that she might feel like telling me, but that she need feel under no obligations at all in the matter.

"I do not often speak to strangers, but something makes me want to tell you a little of my history that will explain what you have heard and seen to-night. It is not customary for such exhibitions to take place in a public sleeper; but, dear lady, I just could not bear to have my children think that He must be slighted in any way in any place; I know that you understand just what I mean. Several years ago my husband lost all his money and his health, and just when things seemed darkest for us we had word that an aunt of his had died and left him all her estate in the southwest. So we left New York and went to Arizona. We had no knowledge of the place, but knew that the ranch was large, well-stocked and efficiently managed, and that there was a good surplus of funds in the bank. But when we got there we were troubled. No neighbors for miles, and when you got to them they were not the kind you would like to associate with. There were, besides, no school or church privileges. My husband was not a Christian, and the thought that I should have to bring

up my two little girls without any help was hard to endure.

“As I was about beginning to despair I received a letter and large package from one of the good women of our church at home. She did not know how we were situated, but inasmuch as I still belonged to them, they would like to know. Couldn’t they help me in any way? How were the girls? How near was the church? etc. Then she told me of a new work they had introduced in the school, a department called the Home Department; you know what that is? Well, then I won’t burden you with explanations, but just say that here was the solution for all my difficulties. The girls and I joined the Department; and every month quarterlies and papers and other literature came to us from the home church. They sent us the order of the Sunday-school service, and on Sundays we had our home school. When the little boy came we had him enrolled on the Cradle Roll. Then it was that husband asked if he, too, might not become a member. I was overjoyed for I had never dared hope that he would join us in our study, for he had professed to disbelieve the Bible. So he joined our class, and we were a united family. Then we began to invite the men and their families that lived on the ranch and we had quite a school. After a little, husband began asking

me questions about my faith, and soon he became an earnest Christian. It was his dream to go back to New York with me and join the dear home church that had reached out its warm hand and kept us close to its heart and interests, and to this we all looked forward. Just as we thought that we might leave, the fever came and after a short illness he was taken from us. His death was so unlooked for that I have felt almost stunned. He was so happy up to the very last, he knew he had to go and called it 'going home to get ready for us,' and that is the way the children think of it all. He loved the hymn we sung to-night above all others, for he used to say that it expressed so sweetly what he could not put into language himself, but which he felt. So we sing it every night as a "good-night" to papa, and I just could not ask them to omit it to-night, if it was a strange thing to do. It does not seem strange to them in their innocence. Now I am going home to my father and to the dear church. I think that I have never told this to any one before, but I felt that you should understand why I made your section perhaps a little conspicuous.

"You say that you know something of the work, and as I saw your Bible and quarterly, I knew that we were of the same family, and I suppose that is why I felt moved to take you

into my confidence. What do you think of this newest child of the Sunday-school? Have you ever had any experience with it?"

For answer I handed her my card and said, "For five years I have given all my time to advancing this Department, but in all that time I have never realized, as you have just now made me realize, what a wonderful evangelizing agency this Department may be." Then, being two women, we just kissed and cried to our hearts' content, and we had our evening service together. Who can measure the amount of good the Home Department may accomplish? It is proving true His saying that "He will not suffer His Word to return unto Him void."

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

A number of small boys were observed looking at a billboard in a field on which was a fraction of a circus picture, with these words, "The Greatest Institution on Earth." They were having a very animated discussion and one said, "I do not think any circus is the greatest institution on earth. I know what is, it is the Burbank Hospital. My brother went there and they made him all new after the accident. A hospital is the very greatest institution about here." "No, it is

not," emphatically stated another. "My brother goes to college in Cambridge, called Harvard. They turn out all sorts of wise men down there. They know just how to do it; so I think that a college is the greatest institution on earth." "Well, you are all wrong," said an ardent little Irish lad. "Guess you haven't been in the new Catholic church in Leominster. My ! but it is fine. And the churches everywhere are all fine, and you ought to know that churches are the very greatest institutions on earth." Another boy, who had studied the picture and the words, and had listened earnestly to the ideas of the other boys, said: "Well, all are big things that you have said, but I do not think you are right. I think that the greatest institution on earth is my father, my mother, and me." We are inclined to agree with the boy. Churches, colleges, hospitals, are all great and grand institutions, but the very greatest institution on this earth to-day is that divinely-instituted one, the family.

Too little attention is paid to-day to the family life. It is the individual that claims our study to the exclusion of the family. Homes have given way to flats and apartments with community dining-rooms, clubs monopolize the attention of both fathers and mothers. Nurses and housekeepers are given the care of children. Teachers and governesses have the training of

their minds. The spiritual life is left to grow as best it may with what help the children may get from the pastor or Sunday-school teacher. We cry out at the irreligion of the day on the part of our young people, and contrast it with the stable thoughtfulness of the deep things of life as manifested by those of a generation ago. The children are not to blame, it is the great change in the manner of living. Progress has been made in many ways, but no improvement can be made on God's way of salvation.

The Home Department of the Sunday-school is one of the best institutions the church can employ to help correct what promises to become one of the greatest of our national evils—a loose family life. If every member of the family can be won to join together in the study of God's Word and all feel a vital interest in the church and school, that family is safe. Let every superintendent and pastor be alive to the wonderful possibilities of this work and see to it that they have one in connection with their school.

Would that this might be the aim of all who love Him and the study of His Word, and that all might strive earnestly to accomplish it. "Every member of every family, a member of the Bible study department of the church; studying together, as a family, the weekly Sunday-school lessons."

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